

K A N
A P P E A L

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R E A S O N:

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T H O U G H T S

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R E L I G I O N.

WHEREIN,

The INTERFERENCE of the CIVIL POWER,

AND

The MATTER OF SUBSCRIPTION,

Are CANDIDLY CONSIDERED.

By a L A Y M A N,
Of HAMPSHIRE.

Quod verum atque decens curo & rogo.

D E V I Z E S,

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M,DCC,LXXIV.

THE PAPERS OF

WILLIAM A. S. O'DONNELL

OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

RELIGION

THE INFLUENCE OF THE CIVIL POWER



BY JAMES M. A. N.

PRINTED BY JAMES M. A. N.

NEW YORK

Printed and sold by JAMES M. A. N. at the New York Office of the House of Commons, in the City of New York.

1850

TO THE
 Right Reverend and Reverend,
 THE
 BISHOPS and CLERGY
 OF THE
 CHURCH of ENGLAND.

Rt. Rev. and Rev. Gentlemen,

THE continual Attacks made in various Ways and from different Quarters on the established Church, and the Desire of satisfying myself, and those under my immediate Tuition, concerning the Propriety of that Mode and Form of Religion, which we profess to follow; were the Motives that gave Birth to the following Disquisitions, which were originally intended only for the Perusal of my own Family, and some of my most intimate Acquaintance. But some of my Friends, to whom I had shewn them in Manuscript, prevailed on me to commit them to the Press, and present them to the Public.

After the many learned and judicious Arguments which have lately been published on the Subject, this will, no Doubt, be considered by some, as a bold Presumption in me; and for this Reason I have taken the Liberty to address my Apology to you in particular, as the Persons whom it more immediately concerns, and the most proper Judges of the Matter.

A 2

You

You are not to expect in the following Tract, any Display of Learning or Eloquence; but if the honest Sentiments of a plain disinterested Layman, can in any Degree contribute towards removing the unreasonable Prejudices of any, who from a mistaken Notion of religious Freedom, would deprive the Followers of the Establishment, of that valuable Liberty which in Fact they themselves enjoy; if the Arguments I have advanced, can suggest any Hints which may tend to a Reconciliation of the present Dissentions, or be a Means of promoting that Harmony and Charity which ought to subsist among all the Professors of CHRIST's Religion (however they may differ in their several Modes of exercising it) I trust I shall have no Reason to repent of this Publication, whatever may be the Objections of those who may entertain a different Opinion.

However defective or improper I may appear in Expression, I humbly hope that You, and every candid Reader, will do me the Justice to believe that I mean not to give Offence to any, and that I had no other Design, either in writing or publishing these Considerations, but to represent what I believe to be true Religion in a fair and rational Light.

P R E.

P R E F A C E.

IF the Rectitude of our Religion as Christians, depends on the Approbation of our own Consciences, guided by the Laws of CHRIST, no earthly Power whatever, can justify the imposing any Thing upon us, as CHRIST'S Religion, which upon proper Enquiry, our Consciences cannot receive as such; but every Christian hath a Right to search the Scriptures for himself, and to follow his own Convictions in whatever concerns his eternal Salvation. And every Society of Christians agreeing amongst themselves in the same Notions, and uniting together in their Practice of Religion, have a Right to prescribe to themselves such Rules for the Exercise of their joint Worship, as they believe to be most agreeable to CHRIST'S Institution,

Institution, and practise it in such a Way, as they think most acceptable to God.

IN every Country where the free and undisturbed Use of this Christian Liberty is permitted and protected by the civil Power, the Governors of the State may be said to hold forth the Religion of JESUS CHRIST, in a Way suitable to its original Design, however numerous the several Societies of Christians may be within their Dominion, or in which soever of those Societies such Governors may chuse to exercise their own personal Religion.

ONE of the greatest Evils attending this Nation in the present Age is, that in general we neither set a due Value on, nor make a right Use of those important Privileges, which by the Blessing of Providence, we may enjoy under the British Government.

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By the Wisdom and Fortitude of our Ancestors, and the Favour of the ALMIGHTY, we are delivered from the Fetters both of civil and religious Tyranny, and are in Possession of every valuable Liberty; but we deprive ourselves of its happy Effects, by the improper Use we make of it.

THE Spirit of Licentiousness and Self-sufficiency hath taken Place among us, and not only produced in many Instances, an Impatience of the wise and salutary Laws of civil Government; but even that religious Freedom which enables us to form ourselves into distinct Societies, according to our several Notions and Persuasions, and to exercise our Religion in the Way our own Consciences approve, without incommoding the Practice of such as differ from us, instead of being improved by each Society, to the Advancement of true Piety towards God, and universal Bene-

Benevolence amongst Men, is made the Occasion of mutual Contention and Animosity between the several different Professors of Christianity.

It cannot indeed be expected that all should think and determine alike in all Points. Difference of Sentiment always did, and probably always will in many Respects, subsist amongst Men; and Difference of Opinion in Matters of Religion, naturally produces Disputation.

BUT the Disputes among Christians, instead of being conducted with that Spirit of Love and Gentleness which CHRIST recommended to his Disciples, have often been expressed in a Strain of mutual Inveective, very unfuitable to the Religion they profess, and the End they pretend to have in View.

EVERY Society has its Errors and Imperfections; but all have seemed to aim rather

rather at the exposing and exaggerating those of the different Profession, than the discovering and reforming their own.

THE Clergy of the established Church have been too zealously attached to their own particular Forms and Ceremonies. The Dissenting Sects have as obstinately contemned and rejected them, and carried their Opposition to so unreasonable a Length, as to make the most innocent and inoffensive Usages of the Church a Plea for their Separation.

MUTUAL Prejudices have served to widen the Breach between them. And though these Prejudices have lately in some Degree subsided, and a general Disposition to Unity hath seemed to be taking Place ; yet the Objections of particular Men to the Terms of Ordination in the established Church, and the Measures taken to obviate those Terms, have revived
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the Spirit of Contention, and produced many illiberal and virulent Reflections, as well as many candid and weighty Arguments on both sides: But the Dispute still subsists.

THE Church of *England*, being that which by the Laws of the State after the Reformation from Popery, was established as the public national Religion, and which at this Time comprehends the Bulk of the People, is still permitted to retain those Revenues which by the Laws were appropriated to the Support of public religious Teachers, and in this Respect stands distinguished by the Legislature above those lesser Sects which have separated from her.

BUT in Point of religious Option and Practice, the Dissenting Societies are no less free than the Followers of the Establishment.

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THEIR Congregations are unmolested, and the Provisions they make for the Support of their respective Pastors suffer no Violation by the civil Power, or the established Church. And notwithstanding some Laws heretofore enacted in their Disfavour, remain yet unrepealed, it must be allowed that partly through the present State of our Laws, and partly through the Wisdom and Mildness of the Administration, the Moderation and Candour of the established Clergy, and the Spirit of the Times, every Society of dissenting Protestants among us, do in Fact at this Time adopt their own Plan of Religion, and exercise it in their own Way, without Fear of Molestation.

SOME of their Clergy have moreover taken Advantage of these Circumstances to arrogate to themselves the Liberty of prescribing Reformation to that Church
from

from which they have separated, whilst in Reality the Practice in their own Societies in many Respects, stands in equal Need of it.

TREATISES have been incessantly published and dispersed into every Part of the Kingdom to favour the Design; and every specious Argument hath been employed to disparage that Mode of Religion which the Legislature hath espoused, and which the major Part of the Community still profess, and to represent the established Clergy in the most unfavourable and injurious Light.

THEIR requiring Subscription to certain Articles as Terms of Admission to the Ministry in their Society, for the Sake of Uniformity and Order, and to prevent Disorder and Confusion amongst themselves, hath been described under the formidable Names of spiritual Tyranny and anti-christian

christian Usurpation, as if those Terms were imposed on the Teachers of every Profession, or as if the refusing to admit Men as Ministers in their Society, who reject their Terms, did totally exclude them from the Church of CHRIST, or that the pastoral Function could be no where exercised to good Effect, but in the Church of England.

THE Abolishing these Subscriptions hath been represented as the Means of uniting all the different Sects in one common Assembly for the public Worship. But if these are the only Bar to this general Union, what is it that keeps the several dissenting Societies, whose Pastors are not subject to these Subscriptions, in a State of Separation from each other? Why are they not united in one common Exercise of their Religion, whatever becomes of the Church of England?

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THE Terms of this Church may indeed be considered as generally held forth to all religious Ministers, as they are free for the Acceptance of all; but none are compelled to accept them, who do not voluntarily profess their Choice and Approbation of them. All who disapprove of them are at Liberty to follow their own Judgment, and to exercise their Ministry, in any other Society, whose Principles and Terms they can approve of; or even to form Societies agreeable to their own Opinions, without Control from the established Church. And therefore the Charges of spiritual Tyranny and anti-christian Usurpation brought against her Bishops and Clergy, cannot be understood to mean that Dissenters are constrained to comply with their Terms, or follow their Rule of Religion, but in Reality because both the Clergy and Laity of the established Church

do

do not forsake what common Charity must suppose to be the Religion of their own Consciences, and conform to the Opinions and Practice of Dissenters.

THE Former are indeed inexcuseable if they do not endeavour to reform whatever they may find amiss in their religious Institution or Practice, and to make every possible Improvement therein. But certainly there can be no Reason for their being influenced by those who have forsaken their Communion, to make any Reformation in Favour of their Prejudices, contrary to their own Opinions, and those of the Generality of their Followers.

ON the other Hand, tho' the established Church may be allowed to comprehend a Majority of the Community, it cannot be a Reason that any Man should conform to their Mode of Religion, contrary to the Dictates of his own Conscience. And therefore

therefore those, who from conscientious Motives have departed from her, and united with any other Society wherein they can practise Religion with greater Satisfaction to themselves, certainly do well in following their own Persuasions, so as they offer no Interruption to the Religion of those who differ from them.

BUT this is not the Case with that Part of the Clergy who have undertaken, and still continue to exercise their Ministry in the Church of *England*, and at the same Time openly revile and condemn her Practice; who, tho' they publicly disavow the Terms, which after mature Deliberation they have solemnly and voluntarily subscribed, cannot prevail on themselves to give up the Emoluments annexed to those Terms.

IF those Terms were obnoxious to them at the Time of their subscribing, how
could

could they justify themselves in making such Subscription? If they have since discovered them to be so, why do they continue in the Exercise of a Ministry whereof their Consciences cannot approve?

IN their Concern for religious Freedom, they seem to have consulted only their own Accomodation, without considering the Inconveniencies that may arise to the Generality of their own Brethren of the same Community by the Liberty they claim to themselves.

THE Sum of the Case is this; Those who disapprove of the established Mode of Religion, plead the Rights of Conscience in Justification of their Demands for a Reformation of it. Those who adhere to it, urge the same Reasons for its Preservation.

How then are all Parties to be satisfied? How is the supreme Magistrate to act, so

as to preserve the public and peaceable Exercise of what himself and the main Body of the People, believe to be true Religion, and at the same Time to indulge the Scruples of those who think otherwise?

To extend the Revenues of the Church, which under God, are committed to his Patronage, to every different Teacher of Religion, without Caution or Distinction would be to induce Men of Principles and Notions contrary to the general Sense of the Community, to discompose their religious Practice, and be a Means of introducing Confusion and general Discontent.

On the contrary, to compel all to conform to the Establishment, would be a manifest Violation of Christian Liberty.

BUT if every Member of the State (whether he approves of the established Church, or prefers any dissenting Profession) be permitted to unite with that Society, wherein

wherein he can practise Religion most agreeably to his own Opinion, and every Society to follow their own Mode of Religion without Restraint, is not FREE LIBERTY of CONSCIENCE granted to them all ?

AND if every dissenting Society among us, are already in Possession of this *Liberty*, how can they justify their Attempts to interrupt their Christian Brethren in the peaceable Exercise of that Priviledge, which they themselves enjoy ?

MAY not their Application to Parliament to compel the Followers of the established Church, to admit in their Congregations, such religious Teachers, as they have Reason to believe, would contradict their Notions, and embarrass their Practice, be justly deemed an Attempt to violate that *Christian Liberty*, which the Petitioners themselves profess to contend for, and

which all true Protestants allow to be the sacred Right of every Christian to himself, and of every Body of Christians agreeing together in the same religious Notions, and associating themselves for the joint Practice of Religion?

It would indeed be happy for us, if all Christians could so far agree in Sentiment, as to join with one Accord in one common Celebration of the public Worship, and it concerns all to consider what are the likeliest Means to accomplish so desirable an Union.

ARBITRARY and compulsive Measures have already been tried; but Thanks be to God, we have discovered them to be not only ineffectual, but anti-christian.

WE cannot expect that Animosity and Contention, mutual Reproaches and uncharitable Reflections on each other, will be conducive to it, or that the permitting one

one Society to interfere with, and obstruct the Religion of another, will ever procure it.

WHILST every Sect continues obstinately attached to their own Mode and Practice of Religion, it will not be possible for them to unite in one general Assembly, for the Exercise of joint and public Worship, without Confusion :-----Other Sentiments must first take Place.

THE same peaceable, gentle and benevolent Principles which actuated the first Planters of our most holy Religion, are still necessary Virtues in all the Professors of it. The same honest Simplicity and steady Regard to Truth, which was apparent in the Former, in their propagating Christianity, should still influence the latter, in all their Endeavours to free it from those Corruptions wherewith the Ages of Tyranny and Darknes have defaced it.

THE

THE Spirit of religious Enquiry was perhaps never more prevalent than in the present Age; but the good Effects of our Enquiries, must depend on the Use we make of our several Discoveries.

IF Difference of Sentiment hath made our Detachment into separate Societies necessary to the Freedom of Conscience, and enabled us to pursue our Investigations to greater Advantage, it hath certainly been serviceable to true Religion: And however God may permit sincere and well-intending Christians, to be separated from each other in the Exercise of their Religion, they are still the Church of CHRIST, that very Church which he hath promised to protect even to the End of the World.

WE all profess to desire and seek after Truth: and the nearer every Society advances towards it, the nearer they approach to Unity with each other.

IF Christians of every Denomination would seriously consider that they are all Disciples of one and the same LORD, and followers of one and the same Religion (tho' in different Ways). If they would cherish a benevolent and friendly Inter-course with each other, and make the same charitable Allowance to all Others, which they crave for themselves, they would behold the Religion of JESUS CHRIST, in a Light very different from that in which the Spirit of Partiality and Prejudice represents it.

ANIMOSITIES about external Forms and doubtful Points of Speculation, would soon begin to decline ; and (tho' not perfect Unity of Sentiment) a general Harmony of Hearts would gradually take Place among them.

AND if every distinct Society would studiously endeavour to improve their
Mode

Mode of Religion amongst themselves, to those great and good Ends, for which Christianity was intended, The Effects it would produce, would in Time convince them which of the several different Professions deserved the Preference and influence them accordingly.

FOR wherever Christians are free from religious Compulsions, and permitted to make the best Use of their Reason and the holy Scriptures, the genuine Doctrines become by Degrees more perfectly and generally understood: And in Proportion to their Advancement in Light and Knowledge, Truth will have its Influence on rational and sober Minds. The wisest Christians will necessarily forsake what their Consciences cannot approve, and prefer and embrace that Mode of Religion, which their Reason convinces them, is most agreeable to the Institutions of its divine Author.

BUT

BUT to engage the civil Power to discompose the Religion of one Society to gratify the Prejudices of another, will only serve to increase Animosity and create Confusion, 'till Time and Providence shall have produced more favourable Circumstances than the present, for a general Uniformity of Practice.

THESE and other like Considerations, prevailed on me to employ some of those Leisure Hours, which a Multiplicity of worldly Business would allow me, in penning the following Strictures, wherein by enquiring into the Nature of Mankind, and sketching the Outlines of divine Revelation, I have endeavoured to trace Religion to its Fountain, and to shew that it really is what God hath declared it to be, viz. the only solid Foundation both of our present and future Happiness.

THOUGHT



THAT

THAT the Religion taught by JESUS CHRIST and his Apostles, is that true Religion which came from GOD, which (if we practise with Sincerity of Heart as we believe they taught it) will secure both our Peace of Mind in this Life, and our compleat Happiness in a Life to come, to whatever Society or Denomination of Christians we may belong.

AND that most of the Disputes among Christians about external Forms, which indeed are but the Shadows of Religion, serve only to detach Men from a due Regard to those substantial Duties which lead to the Happiness of every Individual apart, and of the whole Community in general.

T H O U G H T S
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R E L I G I O N.

EVERY Man hath a Principle of Self-love and Self-preservation implanted in him, which leads him to shun whatever he conceives may give him Pain or Disquietude, and to embrace whatever he supposes may afford him Benefit or Pleasure. Brutes possess this Faculty as well as Men; but to be conscious of the Possession of it, to contemplate and trace it to its original Fountain, to discover and understand its general as well as particular Use and Tendency, and to improve and apply it in every Exigency and Circumstance of Life, under a due Sense of its divine Author, and his Wisdom in bestowing it, is not in the Power of Brutes, but peculiar to rational

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and intelligent Beings : and this denotes Man to be of a Capacity and Dignity superior to Brutes. The Wisdom and Happiness of Mankind consists in their making a right Use of this excellent Faculty ; and all the Miseries that have befallen the human Race, have sprung from the Neglect or Abuse of it.

EVERY Man wishes Happiness to himself, but too many place it in wrong Objects, and are therefore disappointed in the Pursuit of it.

MAN consists of a Soul and a Body ; his Body like those of Brutes was formed of earthly Materials, and must like them return to Earth from whence it was taken ; but the Soul of Man can never die ; when Death has separated it from its earthly Tabernacle, it will still exist, and be in a State of Happiness or Misery, according as it hath been employed in this Life. It is the Will of the great Creator of all Things that all Men should be happy, and he hath given them such Information of their own Nature and his Will, as is necessary to make them so. Their Conformity to
what

what God hath made known to them as his Will, is their certain Way to Happiness, and he hath given them Reason and Understanding to perceive and know it, and Freedom of Will and Action to obey and pursue it so that the whole Man both Soul and Body, may in a future State be made completely happy. For tho' our earthly Bodies are to be destroyed by Death, committed to the Grave and mouldered into Dust, yet by the Power of the Almighty who formed them, they will be raised again from their State of Corruption and Death, and reanimated and fitted for their future Destination either to Bliss or Woe, according to what they have done in this Life. Therefore the highest Wisdom of Man consists in his having a due Regard to his spiritual and eternal Interest, and pursuing such Measures for securing it as God hath thought fit to point out to him.

It must be acknowledged that the State of Mankind is truly lamentable whenever this important Concern becomes generally neglected: When that which solid Reason represents as most valuable and

commendable (as being conducive to their real Perfection and Happiness) is treated with Indifference and Neglect, and whatever is destructive of their truest and best Interest is espoused and pursued. But however shocking to sober Reason such a Situation may be, it appears to be too much the Case of this Age and this Nation in particular; for altho' the Sense of Virtue is not wholly extinguished amongst us, tho' there still are many good Men remaining, yet it must be owned that a growing Licentiousness and Immorality hath taken Place; and whoever seriously reflects on it may soon discover some of the principal Causes.

WHOEVER hath a sacred Regard to the Honour of GOD, and that holy Religion which JESUS CHRIST came down from Heaven to establish on Earth, if he has any real Charity for Mankind, any Desire to promote Peace and Felicity in the World, any Belief of a future State, and any true Hopes of Rewards therein to Virtue and Piety, will at least find himself inclined to use some Endeavours to stem that

that Torrent of Irreligion and Infidelity, which is broke in upon us, and to prevent the mischievous Effects of that general Diffipation and immoderate Love of Pleasure, which spring originally from the same Causes, *viz.* the Neglect or Abuse of divine Revelation, and prevails more or less in all Ranks of People, and threatens us with approaching Misery and Calamity.

IF we trace Religion to its Fountain, if we enquire into the human Nature, and sketch but the Out-lines of divine Revelation, we shall find it to be what the great Author of it intended it to be, *viz.* the only solid Foundation both of our present and future Happiness. The Reasonableness of such Laws as tend to the Preservation of the common Happiness of Mankind, plainly suggests the Wisdom and Goodness of the sovereign Law-giver, and the Necessity of Obedience. If all the Laws of Piety and Morality which Reason and Religion teach were to be cast off, if all the Rules of Modesty, Temperance, Civility and Subordination, the conscious Sense of Honesty and the Principles of Charity were to be disregarded

disregarded amongst Men, who then could be safe or happy? And how could any salutary Regulation be supported without some Sense and Regard of Religion and its Obligation? A general Neglect of this in every Nation where it has taken Place, has commonly been the Prelude to Distraction and general Misery. The History of almost every Nation will furnish us with Exemplifications of this Truth: And a little Reflection on the present State of our own Country will convince us, that a Contempt of the Laws of God and Religion, hath been the Cause of Licentiousness, Faction, Discontent, Disorder and Opposition to the Laws of civil Government on the one Part, and of Corruption, Vengality, Arrogance, and unconstitutional Measures on the other; and what can the End of such Disorders be if persevered in, but Anarchy, Confusion, and universal Misery and Distress?

It is indeed no Wonder that Religion is become lightly regarded by the illiterate and lower Class of People, that all Restraint on the inordinate Desires and Inclinations

nations of Men should in a great Degree be taken off, and every Kind of Vice become fashionable, whilst the Example of so many Persons of elevated Rank and Station, (whose Importance in Life is very apt to influence the Vulgar) so powerfully leads the Way: No Wonder that we find the very Being of God openly derided, and the most horrid and senseless Impieties countenanced, whilst the Rich and Great are so devoted to Dissipation and Pleasures, so immersed in Debauchery and every Species of Licentiousness, that the very Notion of a holy and righteous God brings Nothing but Horror to their Apprehensions. For the Belief of an omniscient, almighty, holy and righteous Being, who regards the Actions of Men, and who will surely punish them for the Abuse and Violation of his Laws, is such a Bar to the Prosecution of their ambitious Views, and the Gratification of their sensual Inclinations, that they must, if possible, at any Rate remove it from their Minds. Their Conduct induces them to wish there was no God, and their Desires and Dispositions so
operate

operate on their Understandings, that their Willingness to have it so, serves them as a Reason for their Belief of it. Their natural Reason convinces them, that if the World and all Things therein, were created by a wise and just GOD, he certainly will require of his rational and intelligent Creatures Duties adequate to their Faculties, and bring them to Account and punish them for the Abuse of his Gifts. They cannot therefore by any Means think themselves secure in their Vices and Pleasures whilst their Minds are impressed with the Sense and Belief of the Deity.

THE Licentiousness of unbridled Wit, the Taste and Attachment to sensual Enjoyments, the Views of unbounded Ambition and Avarice, and the Pride of conceited Philosophy are irreconcilable with the Doctrines of Christian Piety, Meekness, Humility, Modesty, Charity, Temperance and Self-denial: And for Men, who pretend to a greater Degree of Light and Knowledge than Others, to confess the Being of a GOD, as the Creator, Governor and Disposer of Mankind, and at the same
Time

Time in all their Measures and Pursuits in Life to act in open Opposition and Defiance of his Laws, would call their boasted Superiority of Wisdom greatly in Question, and make them justly liable to the Imputation of Absurdity and palpable Inconsistency, in the Judgment and Opinion of all *reasonable Men*.

To obviate this Difficulty, and to make their Principles and Practice appear uniform and consistent (whatever their inward Conviction to the contrary may be) they find it necessary to ridicule both the Existence of God, and the Obligation of those Laws which are supposed to come from Him; to disown the Authority of the *Christian Religion*, deny all Revelation, and treat with Contempt the Doctrine of the Soul's Immortality, and of a future State of Rewards to Virtue, and Punishments to Vice; and this they represent as the Discovery of *extraordinary Wisdom and Discernment*, not to be expected in vulgar Minds: But let us consider the Merit and Tendency of this *supposed Wisdom*.

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SUPPOSING

SUPPOSING, the *Reality* of a future Judgment and State of Happiness or Misery, to be Matters of Uncertainty (which by the Way they cannot by their *most subtil Arguments* maintain) even in this Case, the believing and virtuous Part of Mankind prove themselves to be the *truly wise Men*; for, should there indeed prove to be such a State, they are laying a Foundation for securing to themselves a *blissful Eternity*: And even if they should happen to have been Mistaken in their Notions, they will nevertheless be upon an Equality with those who have rejected the Belief of it: Whereas the Others, for the Sake of a *short-liv'd Vanity in this World*, renounce all Claim to a Participation in that promised Happiness, cut off every pleasing Hope and solid Comfort, and *wilfully* expose themselves to the Danger of a *miserable Futurity*, should there in Reality prove to be a future State of Punishment to Unbelievers and wicked Men; and are therefore Fools to themselves in neglecting their own Security.

BUT

BUT whatever *these over-wise Men* may say or pretend to believe, the Notion of an ALMIGHTY and ALL-WISE CREATOR and GOVERNOR of the Universe, is so strongly implanted in the human Mind, even by the Light of Nature, that it is not easy to suppose it can by any Arguments whatever be wholly banished from it, since the more it is exercised in Contemplation and the Use of solid Reason, the greater of Necessity will be our Conviction and Confirmation of the Truth of that Idea. No one can argue against it without doing Violence to the natural Notions of Truth, by affirming what he cannot possibly prove, or denying what he can by no Means refute: Every Object we contemplate serves to establish and confirm us in the Belief of it.

CAN we consider the wonderful Structure and vast Expanse of the boundless Universe, the magnificent Splendor, Order and Motion of the heavenly Orbs, the Vegetation and various Beauties and Properties of Trees and Plants, the Propagation, Succession and different Nature of

Animals, and their continued Preservation, in the Figure, Motions, and Instincts peculiar to their respective Species, the Nature and Effects of Air, Fire and Water, or any of the Works of Nature, with their Beauty, Variety, Usefulness and wise Contrivance, without discerning the Author of them? From what Source can we derive those admirable Faculties wherewith the *Mind of Man* is endued? Can we possibly suppose such harmonious and regular Perfections to be the Production of *unadvised* and *undefining Chance*, and that this *Chance* still continues and preserves them uniform and unaltered in their several accidental Channels?

WE cannot meditate on these Things seriously without concluding even Nature itself to have been produced and conducted by an ALL-WISE and OMNIPOTENT AUTHOR: We cannot trace Things up to their Origin without arriving at some primary Source, some ALL-SUFFICIENT and SELF-EXISTENT CAUSE, and what can that be but GOD? Effects without a Cause, an infinite Series of Causes, a fortuitous Course

course of Atoms, are such *Abfurditities*, that one cannot suppose any Man so unreasonable as to deceive himself with the Belief of it.

If we appeal to our Reason we cannot but acknowledge the Obviousness of St. Paul's Remark on this Argument, *viz. As every House is built by some Man, so he that built all Things is GOD, Heb. iii. 4.*

WHATEVER Pride, Stupidity, Ignorance, false Reasoning or habitual Wick- edness may induce Men to say, they cannot in Earnest be brought to believe they made themselves, or that they were furnished with Capacity of Contemplation and Reflection, Understanding, Reason, Speech, Will and Action by *mere Chance*; or even that GOD almighty made such admirable Creatures for no greater Design than merely to pass a few transient Years on Earth in trifling Amusement, or sensual Gratifications; or without intending to take further Care and Cognizance of them here, and calling them to Account, and punishing them for the Abuse of those superior Faculties, which so eminently distinguish them

them from all the other Creatures upon Earth.

IN short, no Man can deny the Being of GOD, 'till he hath divested himself of the most obvious Notices and Principles of human Reason and Understanding ; for as *Nothing* can produce *Nothing*, every Thing that had a *Beginning* must have had a *Cause*, and there must have been some *Being* without a *Beginning* and without a *Cause*, self-existent, even GOD the *Cause of all Things*.

THE Belief of a GOD necessarily carries with it some Sense of Adoration and Obedience, and leads the Believer to the Enquiry and Pursuit of what he apprehends to be the Will of the Deity, with Respect to his own Conduct and Deportment. Accordingly we find the most barbarous and ignorant Nations have generally annexed the one to the other ; altho' in their *unenlightened State*, their Notions both of GOD's Nature and their own Duty, have every where been *imperfect and unworthy*.

IF we believe there is a GOD who made all Things, we cannot but believe that he is a wise, omnipotent and good Being; for his Wisdom, Goodness, and Power, are as conspicuous to the *Eye of Reason*, as his Works themselves: And therefore we must believe that the same Wisdom, Goodness, and Power, which produced such an infinite Variety of Creatures, with such various Faculties and Powers, still upholds and preserves their Being and Nature, with a View to their answering those wise and good Ends for which they were created; and that Mankind in particular were endued with *Reason* and *Understanding* to enable them to *know their Creator*, to direct them in the Investigation of the Nature of Things, to discover their *good* or *evil* Tendency, and to guide their Actions and Measures accordingly.

THE Principles of *moral Good* and *Evil*, are so legible in all the Contrivance and Appearances of our Nature, so necessary to the Preservation and Well-being of Mankind, their *Equity* so apparent, and their *Utility* so obvious, in all the Actions
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of human Life, that no reasonable Man can reflect thereon, without being sensible of the Necessity and Obligation of Laws to support them; and that it is impossible for human Society to subsist without some Regard to their Authority.

THE Wisdom and Goodness of divine Providence is therefore apparent in appointing to Mankind by *express Revelation*, such Laws and Ordinances as are suitable to their Nature and Circumstances, to establish their Belief and Dependence on GOD, as their *Creator and Governor*, and procure the Happiness of every Individual in such a Way as might tend to the Preservation of the Happiness of the whole Community; and in letting them know that it is his Will they should comply with those Laws and Ordinances, if they would escape the Miseries, and enjoy the real Comforts even of this Life, and this under the Assurance of still greater Rewards to the Obedient, and Punishments to the Disobedient in a Future State.

WHEN I speak of *Revelation*, I mean no other than what is contained in the Books
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of the *Old* and *New Testament*, which we have all the Reason in the World to believe came from GOD, and contain whatever is expedient for Mankind to know of the divine Will, whatever is necessary to their Peace and Well-being here, and their Happiness hereafter.

Heathens and *Mahometans* have indeed pretended a divine Revelation for the Support of their several Religions; but if we examine the Doctrines which these Religions advance, we shall find them *absurd, unreasonable, and vain*; and therefore we cannot but reject their Pretensions to a Revelation from GOD, since we cannot suppose the *omniscient, all-wise and righteous Creator and Governor* of all Things to be the Author of any Thing *absurd or unreasonable*.

As to the *Pagan Religion*, it is a Mixture of *Inconsistency, Vanity and Folly*; their Acts of Religion a Scene of *offspring, lewd and ridiculous Practices*, unworthy of rational Beings, as they by no Means tend to the Glory of GOD, or to the Happiness of Mankind.

CAN we suppose that God would direct Men to pay divine Worship to any of his Creatures, the Sun, Moon, or Stars, or to the Spirits of departed Men, such of them too, as in their Lives were odious and detestable, guilty of Murder, Rapine, Theft, Treachery, Parricide, Adultery, and every Species of Vice and Villany, every Practice destructive of the Peace and Well-being of their Fellow-Creatures? Or to the vilest Brute Beasts, or to Things inanimate, the Works of their own Hands, and even to empty Names and Shadows? Yet we find these were the Gods they worshiped and adored; to these they offered their solemn Prayers; and in these they confided for Protection and Safety, Support and Prosperity. Could we propose any Satisfaction, or expect any Benefit worthy of a rational Creature in such a Faith and such a Religion as this?

INSTEAD of that mental Consolation and Confidence, that solid Satisfaction which arises from the Worship of the *one supreme God, the Creator and Governor of all Things*, in such a Way as our Reason assures us
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will procure us his favourable Regard and entitle us to his almighty Protection, we could not but know that we were paying divine Honours to helpless Creatures, from whom we never could receive that Succour and Support we stand in Need of, and should therefore in our very Acts of Piety be sinning against the Light of Nature, and subverting every rational and beneficial End of true Religion: and therefore we cannot be persuaded that such a Religion came from God.

As to the Pretence of divine Revelation in Support of *Mahometanism*, we shall upon close Enquiry find it to be merely the Contrivance of a crafty Impostor, with the View of attaining to an arbitrary and despotic Sovereignty over a mixed Multitude, consisting of ignorant or wicked *Christians*, abandoned *Jews*, and savage *Arabs*, whose different Notions and Persuasions required great Art and Subtility to reduce them to Obedience under one and the same Government.

THIS complicated System of Religion was therefore invented and adapted accordingly,

cordingly, divers Particulars being introduced in the Composition of it, agreeable to the Notions of *Christians*, of *Jews*, and of *Pagans*, to sooth their several Hopes and Expectations, and to conciliate and unite them in Subjection to their common Tyrant.

THE Pretence of its being revealed from Heaven was the most likely Artifice to prevail on the ignorant and credulous Part of them, and the Promise of a Paradise of sensual Delights, was a powerful Inducement to the Profligate. The Injunction of certain external Rites and Ceremonies observed in each of the different Religions was a likely Means to gain over the Superstitious of each Persuasion. And the Introduction of certain Doctrines of Faith and Morality agreeable to right Reason, was the only Contrivance that could be expected to engage the Attention and Regard of the rational and considerate Part of them. And as to those amongst them who could not be prevailed upon by either of the aforementioned Arts, the Influence of despotic Power, and the Terror
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of the Sword remained to be an Awe and a Compulsion.

THIS pretended Revelation is contained in a Book called *The Koran*, or *Alchoran*: The Author of it was one *Mahomet*, an *Arabian*, who is said to have been born at *Mecca*, in the Year of CHRIST 571, and descended of the eldest Branch of an honourable Tribe; but his Family were at that Time much reduced. His Uncle *Abu-taleb*, who was a Merchant, took him into his Service, and he traded for him into *Egypt*, *Syria*, and *Palestine*. Here he became acquainted with certain *Jews* and *Christians*, by whose Assistance he was enabled to compose his *Alchoran*. He was afterwards invited into the Service of a rich Widow named *Kadiga*, for whom he carried on a Trade to *Damascus* and other Places, and whom he soon married, and thereby became one of the richest Men in *Mecca*.

HAVING taken Notice of the numerous Sects and Divisions amongst *Christians*, in his Journeys to *Palestine*, &c. he thought it might be practicable for him to introduce

duce a new Religion, and by that Means make himself both the High Priest and Sovereign of the People, which he artfully proposed to do by pretending to revive the primitive Way of Worship and Purity practised by the antient Patriarchs.

His first Step was to gain the Admiration of the People by his Devotion and abstemious Life, and therefore retired every Morning into a Cave near *Mecca*, where he is said to have spent his Time in Praying, Fasting, and other Acts of Mortification: And when he returned Home, he used to entertain his Wife and Family with an Account of the Visions he had seen, and the strange Voices he had heard in his Retirement.

HAVING continued this Practice for two Years, and acquired a great Reputation for his Sanctity, he ventured publicly to declare himself a Prophet sent from God to reclaim his heathenish Countrymen from their Idolatry, and to compel them to embrace what he delivered as the true Religion sent from God.

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HE did not deny the Mission of JESUS CHRIST, or *Moses*, or the divine Authority of the *Old and New Testament*; but charged both *Jews* and *Christians* with corrupting the sacred Scriptures, and declared he was sent to purge them from their Errors, and to restore the Law of GOD to its primitive Purity: after which he proceeded to publish his *Alchoran*, which he pretended was brought to him from GOD, by the Angel *Gabriel*.

○ AMONGST other Doctrines, he taught, *That there is but one GOD, gracious and merciful, the Lord of the whole Universe----that Men are to resign themselves to him-----that all who obey him will certainly be rewarded, and that those who disobey him will surely be punished, and the like.*

BUT as these Doctrines had been taught before the Days of *Mahomet*, both in the *Jewish* and *Christian* Scriptures, and as *Mahomet* had the Opportunity of consulting them both, and was acquainted with many Persons of both Professions, there is great Reason to believe that all such Parts of the *Alchoran* were borrowed from them: For
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altho' he asserted that his *Alchoran* was sent from God, yet he declared that the Scriptures both of the *Old* and *New Testament*, came from God also. Now the *Alchoran* in many Parts of it, directly contradicts the *Old* and *New Testament*, and therefore it is absurd to suppose they all came from God; for if God be perfectly omniscient and wise, and invariably righteous and true, (which all Reason assures us he is) he could not declare one Thing to be true at one Time, and quite the reverse at another. And if the *Old* and *New Testament* came from God, (as *Mahomet* himself confesses they did) they certainly were true, and the *Alchoran*, which was published after them, and contradicted them, could not be true also, and therefore could not come from God.

BESIDES, we may observe that divers Parts of the *Alchoran* itself directly contradicts other Parts of it, which is another Reason for rejecting it as a divine Revelation. And as to *Mahomet* himself, if the History of him be true, he was a most consummate Hypocrite, inhuman, cruel,
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and libidinous; and can we suppose the great God of Purity and Truth, Mercy and Righteousness, would chuse so vile and dissolute a Wretch as he appears to have been, to reveal his sacred Will to Mankind? Or can we believe that the Joys of Paradise prepared by God for good and holy Men, should consist (as he declares they will) of lascivious Indulgence and sensual Enjoyments? Besides, the *Alchoran* contains so many *blasphemous Stories*, so many *absurd, ridiculous and incredible Relations*, that whenever it is examined with sober Reason, it cannot but appear in its proper Light, and be considered as a crafty and politic Contrivance, and an impudent Imposition on the World.

ALTHO' Mahomet was so *able* and *absolute* an *Impostor*, he did not dare to pretend to open Miracles, the great Criterion of divine Truth, and the Basis of those Revelations, he would endeavour to imitate, and which he acknowledged to have been wrought in Attestation of their divine Origin. Many, it is said, urged him to produce them,

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many asked Signs of him, but he artfully evaded the Trial, and in many Parts of his *Alchoran* seems more embarrassed to shift off the Charge of Imposture incurred by not manifesting his Vocation by those Signs, than to establish his Doctrines. Even his own Uncle and Relations seemed on this Account to detest his Imposition.

It answered however his main Purpose, by raising him to an absolute Sovereignty, and he thereupon not only commanded an implicit Belief of his *Alchoran*, but compelled Obedience thereto by the Sword, and prohibited all Examination of, and Disputes concerning its Truth and Authority under Pain of Death, which is a strong Argument that he himself believed such Enquiries, if allowed, would discover and prove it to be *all a Cheat*.

As to the *Jewish Religion*, it has all the genuine Marks of divine Original, and whoever reads the Particulars of it, contained in the Writings of the *Old Testament*, with *serious Attention* and *impartial Reason*, must be convinced that it came from God; and will easily perceive it to be a Revelation
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of so much of the divine Will, as was necessary to prepare Mankind for the *Christian Revelation* comprised in the Books of the *New Testament*. No one can believe the divine Authority of the latter without allowing that of the former, and whoever acknowledges the divine Authority of both, hath all the Reason in the World to believe they contain the WHOLE REVELATION of the Will of GOD to Mankind.

WITHOUT this Revelation our Knowledge both of GOD and ourselves, would have been very defective, as we may perceive by the Notions and Practices of unenlightened Nations. We could not without them have framed to ourselves any wise and beneficial Laws either moral or religious, but by various careful Observations and elaborate Trains of Reasoning, and even then our best Conclusions would have been imperfect.

THE Light of Nature indeed discovers the Being of a GOD, and suggests some Obligation of Worship and Obedience to the Deity, but our natural Reason is not ca-

pable of discovering all that is necessary for us to know in this Respect without the Aid of divine Revelation; so that without the Scriptures we had remained in Darkness and Uncertainty both as to the Perfections of the Deity and our own Duty and Happiness.

BUT in these sacred Records we find, not only the Being of God asserted and his Nature display'd, but all that is necessary for us to know and to do towards our own Perfection and Happiness, is therein plainly taught and revealed. By these we discover what Relation we stand in with Respect to GOD; what his gracious Purposes towards us are; and what he requires at our Hands.

THE Publication of these divine Truths to Mankind was attended with so many, and such evident and indisputable Tokens of supernatural Power and Authority, that no reasonable Man who reads them can doubt their divine Original. " They presented us with a brief, but uniform and
" consistent View (given in several distant
" Ages of the World, by Persons inspired
" and

“ and conducted by a *Spirit* which saw thro’
 “ Futurity) of all the Transactions of the
 “ ALMIGHTY with Regard to the rational
 “ Inhabitants of this Earth, that were ne-
 “ cessary to be made known to them; giv-
 “ ing us some Account, either historical
 “ or prophetic of almost every Thing
 “ great and important in the Course of di-
 “ vine Providence, that has been, or is to
 “ be transacted on the vast Theatre of the
 “ World, during the whole Time of its
 “ being inhabited (at least by our Species)
 “ from its first Change from a *Chaos* to an
 “ habitable World, ’till it shall again be
 “ reduced to a *Chaos* by Fire. And not
 “ only so, but opening to us a View be-
 “ yond Death and Time into ETERNITY,
 “ bringing to Light the World of Spirits,
 “ and disclosing innumerable interesting
 “ Truths, which no human Sagacity could
 “ have discovered.*”

In these inestimable Books all such Laws
 as are necessary to the Peace, Security and
 Happiness of Mankind, are distinctly laid
 down in particular Rules and Precepts,
 made

* Youth’s friendly MONITOR.

made easy to our Practice by familiar Instances and Examples in Life, and enforced under the most obvious and prevalent Motives of Reason, by the annexing Happiness to Obedience and Misery to Disobedience; so that our Duty is here made known to us in a System of plain and easy Propositions: These therefore are to be our Rule both of Faith and Manners, our only Direction to true and lasting Happiness.

THEY begin with informing us, that all Things were made by GOD, the Heavens, the Earth, the Seas, and all that they contain.----That Man was formed of the Dust of the Ground (as other terrestrial Animals were) but dignified and distinguished above all the rest by the Impression of the divine Image, being inspired with a reasonable and immortal Soul, capable of contemplating the Works and Perfections of his CREATOR, and of knowing and obeying his Will.

FROM the concise History here given us of the first created Pair of the human Species, we find them represented as coming forth

forth from the Hand of their Maker in a State of Innocence and Felicity, instructed in their Duty and Interest, animated by his paternal Benediction, vested with Dominion over all the Creatures around them, and placed in a delightful Paradise, fraught with every Thing that was necessary for their Sustenance and Comfort.

THEY had indeed *Good* and *Evil* set before them, and *Freedom of Will* and *Option*, to chuse and embrace either the one or the other: But they had also *Reason* given them to direct their Choice, whereby they were able to discern that no Ill could befall them, whilst they obeyed the Caution and Command they had received from GOD.

THUS qualified and thus encouraged to preserve their native Happiness were our first Parents, when they yielded to the Seduction of the evil Spirit under the Disguise of a subtil Serpent, violated the plain Command they had received from GOD, forfeited their blissful Habitation and rendered themselves and all their Posterity liable to Misery and Death.

BUT

BUT altho' GOD, agreeable to what He had fore-warned them of, pronounced on them the direful Sentence of their Banishment and future Sufferings, as the just Punishment of their wilful Transgression, yet he did not leave them in a State of Desperation under this their unhappy Fall; but his tender Love for the human Race, and his benign Purpose of providing them a Means of Restoration, were instantly disclosed to them, by his declaring to them, that *The Seed of the Woman should bruise the Serpent's Head*; thereby signifying to them a Victory that should at some future Time be obtained by the Offspring of the Woman over this their grand Enemy and Seducer. For, altho' this Promise (as it is expressed by *Moses*) seems to have been delivered in obscure Terms, yet it cannot be doubted but *Adam* and his Wife understood the Sense in which the Seed of the Woman was to bruise the Head of the Serpent, otherwise the Revelation had been given to no Purpose: And altho' they may not have been made to know the exact Time when this desirable Event should

should happen, yet doubtless they had a Sense of that important Victory which should be obtained by the MESSIAH over Sin and Death, and the Restoration of the human Race to the Favour of GOD by his Means. And it is not altogether improbable that the Sense of this interesting Expectation might produce that Expression from *Eve*, when at the Birth of her first Son, she with seeming Joy declared to *Adam* she had gotten a Man from the LORD, altho' the Sequel proved she was mistaken in the Person, if she really had any Thought that this was the promised Redeemer. And altho' we find their Descendants henceforward continually erring from the Paths of Virtue, and prone to every Kind of Wickedness; yet we see GOD did not forsake them; but as the tender and provident Parent of Mankind pitying their frail and fallen State, and still watching over them with a paternal Love and Concern, frequently renewing to them the Promise of their intended Deliverance, and from Time to Time disclosing his Will to them, as their particu-

lar Condition and Circumstances required, and as he in his Wisdom saw fit and expedient.

IN this Manner hath God been all along preparing Mankind for the great and glorious Designs of his good Providence, and engaging their Compliance with such Laws as he from Time to Time made known to them, by various Instances of his Favour, or Displeasure, suited to their Obedience or Neglect of those Laws.

THE Respect shewn to righteous *Abel* and his Offering in Preference to his Brother *Cain*, declared to them God's Knowledge of the Hearts of Men; and the Punishment afterwards inflicted on *Cain* for the Murder of his Brother, proclaimed to Mankind in the earliest Ages of the World the Vengeance due to that horrid Crime, and that the ALMIGHTY would not suffer it to go unpunished.

THE Destruction of a corrupted Generation of Men by a Flood, and the Preservation of one righteous Man and his Family from that general Calamity discovered to the Survivors and their Posterity

terity that only Virtue could entitle them to the Favour and Protection of God, and that it was equally in the Power of the ALMIGHTY to destroy a wicked World, as one single wicked Man.

THE Defeat of the Postdeluvians in their intended mighty Structure, whereby they vainly flattered themselves with the Hopes of eluding any future Designs of Providence to destroy them in like Manner, shewed them how vain it was for Men to suppose that by their most powerful Combinations, or by any Art or Contrivance whatever, they could escape the Hand of the ALMIGHTY. The Confounding their Language was an effectual Means of baffling their vain Enterprize, and all the future Projects that might have sprung from their being permitted to complete their intended Edifice. The compelling them to form themselves into separate Societies according to the different Dialects they were on this Occasion severally furnished with, and their Dispersion and Emigration into different Quarters of the Earth, probably severed those few among them who

had retained the Sense and Worship of the one true GOD, from the idolatrous Herd, and thereby to preserve his Worship (at least in some small Parts of them) without which an universal idolatrous Empire might have been established in the World.

THE Consuming of the Cities of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* by Fire from Heaven, and the remarkable Deliverance of *Lot*, who had withstood their detestable Practices, were Proofs of GOD's Abhorrence of the Wicked, and his Care of virtuous Men : and the open Vengeance executed on those abominable Sinners was an Example and Warning to all succeeding Generations.

THE Knowledge of these alarming Facts communicated by GOD to *Abraham*, and his chusing him on Account of his singular Piety and Integrity, apart from all other Men in the World, at a Time when they were almost universally sunk into Idolatry, and a general Corruption of Manners ; and the establishing a Covenant with him and his Posterity, and assuring him that in his Seed all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed, was apparently a Renewal of
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the Promise made to *Adam* after the Fall, and pointed out the Reason of *Abraham's* being so remarkably distinguished from all other Men in the World, and the Advantages of adhering to the true GOD, confiding in his Promises, and obeying his Laws, and GOD's Approbation of our recommending the same prudent and virtuous Measures to Posterity. For we find this in particular given by GOD as a Reason for his singular Favour towards *Abraham*. *Shall I hide from Abraham the Thing which I do, seeing he shall surely become a great and mighty Nation, and all the Nations of the Earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him that he will command his Children and his Household after him, and they shall keep the Way of the LORD to do Judgment and Justice, that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which was spoken of him,* Gen. xviii. 17, 18, 19.

AND here we may observe, that altho' *Abraham* and his Seed (amongst whom the Worship of the true GOD was so signally preserved) were to be distinguished above all the Nations and Families upon Earth
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by a remarkable and extraordinary Providence, as the Instruments in the Hand of God of conveying the Means of Salvation and Happiness to Mankind; yet the Goodness of God was not to be confined to that Family alone, but all the Nations upon Earth were to experience the blessed Effects of that gracious Promise.

THE many distinguishing Marks of the divine Favour and Protection extended to *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, under all the various Circumstances and Incidents that befel them, must have convinced their Children that it was their greatest Interest and only Security, to obey and confide in the God of their Fathers, and that he was the only true God.

The many Wonders which God wrought in Behalf of the *Children of Israel*, before, and during their Residence amongst the *Egyptians*, and the visible and irresistible Power whereby he protected and brought them forth from amongst those their cruel Oppressors, and conducted them to, and settled them in the Land which he had promised their Fathers to give them, could
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not but afford them ample Assurance that the God of *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob* was both faithful to his Promises, and abundantly able to perform them.

THE discernible Hand of God, which had all along protected and preserved them through a series of most wonderful Events, the awful Solemnities that attended the Promulgation of the Laws delivered to them on Mount *Sinai*, and the many repeated Assurances God had given them of his constant Favour and almighty Protection, whilst they should continue to yield due Obedience to those Laws, and the Declaration wherewith that Revelation was opened, I AM THE LORD THY GOD, must unavoidably have had a striking and powerful Effect upon their Minds, and thoroughly convinced them that those fearful Prodigies were no Delusion, and that those Laws came immediately from that great and tremendous God, whose Power their Enemies were not able to withstand, and whose Goodness they and their Fathers had in so many Instances experienced.

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THE Declaration which *Moses* then made to them that the LORD their GOD should raise up from amongst their Brethren a Prophet like unto himself, and that they were to hearken unto him in all Things, plainly intimated, that those very Laws at some future Time, were to receive additional Sanction by some Messenger from GOD, of more exalted Character and Authority than himself; and this could not but raise their Expectations, and possess them with very high Hopes of this great Prophet and Law-giver now promised to them by *Moses*.

THE many repeated Predictions concerning the Coming of this great Personage, made to the *Jews* by their Prophets in succeeding Ages, still more and more particular and descriptive, as the important Æra drew on, must still more and more strongly have confirmed them in the Expectation and Desire of his Appearance.

THE numerous wonderful and astonishing Acts, which GOD wrought for them in the Sight of those idolatrous Nations who opposed them, must necessarily incline those

those Nations to entertain a mighty Dread as well as very high Opinion of the God of *Israel*, as they could not but see them protected and supported by a Power, which neither they, nor their fancied Deities were able to resist.

THE *Israelites* themselves could not but perceive that their Success and Prosperity depended on their trusting in God and observing those Laws which he had given them.

THE Promises and Threatnings which accompanied the Delivery of those Laws, and the many Instances of signal Vengeance executed from Time to Time on notorious Transgressors of them, the Glory and Prosperity of their good Kings, and the Ills that attended the Reigns of such of them as did Evil in the Sight of the LORD; the Declarations and Warnings of all their Prophets, and all their Experience of God's Dealings with them, were certainly sufficient to convince them, that whenever they departed from the Worship of the LORD their God, and joined with any of those idolatrous Nations in
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their false Religions, or violated those Laws which God had given them, his protecting Hand was soon withdrawn, and either Oppression in their own Land, Captivity in foreign Countries, or some other sad Calamity quickly overtook them.

ALL these Things, how different soever in their several Aspects, or how opposite to each other in their several immediate Effects, were nevertheless, as so many different Links in the great Chain of Providence, co-operating in one ultimate Purpose, and carrying on the great and benevolent Designs of God towards Mankind. They all contributed more or less to awaken their slumbering Reason, to make God's sovereign Power and Goodness known to the World, and to prepare all Nations, to whom the *Israelites*, their History and their *Religion* and *Laws* should be made known, for the Acceptance of that pure and heavenly Religion, which in due Time was to be revealed by the MESSIAH.

As *Moses* was typical a Representative of this divine Prophet, so were the Sacrifices,

ces, and most of the Ceremonials enjoined by their Laws, Shadows and Prefigurations of some greater good Things to be expected from the Manifestation of the Religion of the MESSIAH, and to prepare Men for the Perception and Apprehension of them, when they should be be manifested and realized.

As to the *Israelites* themselves, whom God thus distinguished as his peculiar People (as being the only Family amongst whom the Knowledge and Worship of the true God had been preserved, and who were to be particularly and eminently instrumental in enlightening and reforming an idolatrous and degenerate World) whether they were obedient or disobedient, whether they prospered or suffered, whether they remained in their own Land, or were scattered and dispersed amongst other Nations, 'till the great Design of God's Providence was carrying on, and advancing by their Conduct.

THEIR Prosperity, so long as they continued faithful and obedient, was a Proof both to themselves and the Nations with

whom they had Intercourse, that their Security consisted in their Trust in the God of their Fathers, and adhering to his Laws.

THEIR Captivities and Dispersions, and the Evils they underwent in the Land of Strangers, whilst they operated as Scourges and Cures of their Infidelity and idolatrous Disposition, and their Neglect of God's Laws, served also to convince the Nations into which they were removed, of the sovereign Power, Justice and Goodness of the God of *Israel*, and the Vanity of placing any Confidence in their imaginary Gods.

THUS their Captivity in *Babylon* spread the Knowledge of the true God in the *Babylonish* Empire, so that *Nebuchadnezzar* (convinced of his mighty Power and Goodness in preserving and delivering his faithful Servants) made a Decree, *That every People, Nation and Language in his Dominion, that should speak any Thing amiss of the God of Israel, should be cut in Pieces, and their Houses be made a Dunghill.*

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IN the Reign of *Belshazzar*, who with his Princes, Wiyes and Concubines, drank Wine at their idolatrous Banquets out of the Vessels that had been taken from the Temple of GOD at *Jerusalem*, GOD gave a glorious Testimony of himself by a Hand writing on the Palace Wall, which, as the Prophet *Daniel* explained it, and the Event that very Night confirmed, fore-told the immediate Overthrow of his Empire, by the *Medes* and *Persians*.

THIS suddain Vengeance on that idolatrous King, for his Impiety in thus profaning the sacred Vessels of the holy Temple, was the Means of conveying the Knowledge of the true GOD into the Empire of the *Medes* and *Persians*, and gave *Daniel* further Opportunities of testifying the Omnipotence and gracious Goodness of the GOD of *Israel*, so that *Darius* was not only moved to authorize the *Jews* to rebuild the Temple of *Jerusalem*, but ordered Sacrifices to be offered to the most high GOD, for the Preservation of himself and his Children; and published a Decree, *That in every Dominion of his Kingdom,*

dom, Men should tremble and fear before the GOD of Daniel, acknowledging him to be the living GOD and stedfast for ever, whose Kingdom should never be destroyed, but his Dominion endure even to the End.

THE Grecian Empire which put an End to the Persian, made GOD still further known in the World, so that Alexander the Great came himself to Jerusalem, treated the Jews with Kindness, and offered Sacrifice to their GOD.

AFTER the Death of Alexander and the Division of the Grecian Empire, the Jews were dispersed into Egypt and Syria, and the Power and Oppression of the Assyrian Monarchs, compelled them to seek the Alliance of the Romans, whereby the History of the Jewish People, their Religion, Laws, and Prophecies, became known over the vast Roman Empire.

THUS by Means of this chosen People of GOD (the Jews) the greatest Part of the then known World, had in some Measure been prepared for the Coming of the MESSIAH. For, altho' the Jews at that Time, through their Attachment to ex-
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ternal Pomp and Ceremonies in Religion, which they considered as the Law of Moses, had almost lost Sight of the spiritual and moral Efficacy of those religious Institutions, yet by conveying their Scriptures with them into the Countries whither they were driven, they furnished them with the Means of coming at the Knowledge of the moral as well as ceremonial Part of their Laws, and made them acquainted with the History of God's Dealings with them, the many Wonders which in divers Parts and divers Ages of the World, had been wrought in their Behalf, the numerous Instances of unexampled Preservation and Deliverance related in their History, wherein an almighty Power was so apparently exerted, that all the Efforts of human Strength and Policy were but vain in resisting it.

HENCE also they might learn that the various Vicissitudes of Prosperity and Adversity, which for many Ages they had undergone, were also directed by the same almighty Hand, (the former always the Consequence of their Obedience, and the latter

latter of their Disobedience to the Laws of their God) and that the many Revelations of future Events, which had from Time to Time been made to them by their Prophets, often at a very remote Distance of Time before such Events happened, had received their Accomplishment in their due and appointed Seasons, and amongst others, they might be made acquainted with the many repeated Predictions concerning the Coming of the MESSIAH as a Messenger of Peace and Salvation to Mankind, and even the very Time and Circumstances of his Appearance.

ALL these Particulars had, by Means of the *Jews*, been communicated to the *Romans*, who at the Time the *Jews* were under the *Roman* Government, had advanced to the highest Degree of Grandeur, Power and Learning, and had carried their victorious Arms into most Parts of the known World.

THE *Romans* with their Conquests, had in some Degree extended the liberal Sciences, and thereby laid a Foundation for improving the intellectual Faculties, and refining

refining the Notions of Mankind, so that Savageness, Barbarism, and Ignorance, might give Place to the Desire of useful Knowledge. And altho' the Prejudices of Education, and the Policy of States were an Impediment to the Advancement of pure Religion, yet the Knowledge of the true God transferred into divers Parts of the World by the *Jews*, and the Learning and Philosophy advanced by the *Greeks* and *Romans* conspired to prepare the more rational and considerate Part of Mankind for the Reception of the MESSIAH, and that rational and spiritual Religion which he came to establish in the World.

IN this View of Things we behold almost the whole Scene of human Affairs unwittingly contributing to the great and glorious Designs of Providence in the Salvation of Mankind.

THE *Romans* themselves as well as the *Jews*, were at the Time of our LORD's Coming, in full Expectation of the Appearance of some distinguished and extraordinary Person amongst the *Jews*, who as they had been taught to believe was to

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possess

possess the universal Empire of the World, tho' none of them seem to have discerned the Nature of his Empire.

BUT whatever Obstacles might lye in the Way of the *Gentiles*, who were blinded and prejudiced by their native Faith and Customs (and especially such of them as had not come to the Knowledge of the *Jewish* Scriptures) to prevent their entertaining proper Notions and Expectations of this predicted Event, yet GOD had amply provided for his peculiar People the *Jews*.

THEY had for many Ages been taken into express Covenant with GOD, and from thence-forth been distinguished from every other Nation and Family upon Earth, as his chosen People, and the most effectual Means had been used to preserve them from Idolatry, and all those Vices and Abominations, which had alienated the Rest of Mankind from GOD.

THEIR Scriptures not only preserved to them the Remembrance of the great Things GOD had done for them, and all those righteous Laws which GOD by *Moses* had

had delivered to them, but also many repeated Declarations and Assurances of his gracious purpose of raising from amongst them the Redeemer of Mankind, and furnished them with numerous Examples of holy Faith, Godliness, Resignation, Patience, Trust in God, Self-examination and Self-Government, many sublime Meditations and admirable Lessons of Piety and Virtue, many pathetical and affecting Admonitions and Invitations to Faith, Hope, Obedience, and Perseverance in all those Virtues which were necessary to prepare them for that holy Religion which the MESSIAH was to teach and exemplify to Mankind, (witness the Book of *Job*, the *Psalms* of *David*, and the *Proverbs* of *Solomon*, as well as the Writings of all the Prophets) that it might be truly said, God had not dealt so with any other Nation.

THEY had moreover experienced so many Instances of God's almighty Power and gracious Goodness in all the Wonders he had wrought for the Preservation of them, their Laws and Religion, and such ample

Testimony of his invariable Truth and Faithfulness to his Promises by the due Accomplishment of so many Revelations, Predictions and Promises, which he had made to them by their Prophets, that they had no Room to doubt the Performance of those Prophecies and Promises which had been so frequently made and repeated to them concerning the Coming of the MESSIAH, in whom they in particular, and with them all the nations of the Earth, were to be blessed.

THEY had been informed that this divine Person should appear in Substance of human Flesh, of the Seed of *Abraham*, of the Tribe of *Judah*, of the House and Lineage of *David*, and by a Succession of Prophecies and Revelations each of which (as the Accomplishment of the benevolent Purpose of GOD advanced) grew still more explicit and particular in Descriptions and Characteristics of this divine Person, and the several Circumstances that were to precede and attend his Appearance, as well as the End and Intent of his Mission, till they came at length to point out the

very

very Time, Person and Character of the MESSIAH *.

BUT

* Here I beg Leave to take Notice of some of the most particular Passages of the Old Testament relating to the Messiah, and of those in the New Testament which correspond with, and answer them.

The OLD TESTAMENT.

A Prophet shall the LORD your GOD raise up unto you from among your Brethren like unto me; him shall ye hear in all Things, *Deut. 18.15*

The Messiah should come of the Seed of *Abraham, Gen. 22. 18.* of the Tribe of *Judah, Gen. 49. 10.* of the Stem of *Jesse, Isai. 11. 1.* a righteous Branch of *David, Jer. 23. 5.*

The Messiah was to be born of a Virgin, *Isai. 7. 14.* at *Bethlehem Ephrata, Mic. 5. 2.*

He was to be the SON of GOD and called out of *Egypt, Hof. 11. 1.*

A Messenger was to be sent before him to prepare his Way, *Mal. 3.* and *Isai. 40. 3.*

The NEW TESTAMENT.

JESUS CHRIST was a Prophet mighty in Deed and Word before GOD and all People, *Luke 24. 19.* even that Prophet which should come into the World, *John 6. 14.* the very Messiah, *John 4. 26.* and a Voice from Heaven proclaimed of him, This is my beloved Son, hear Him, *Luke 9. 35.*

The Descent of JESUS CHRIST is traced up to *David, Jesse, Judah and Abraham, Mat. 1. 18. Luke 3.*

JESUS was born of a Virgin, *Mat. 1. 18.* at *Bethlehem, Luke 2.*

JESUS was the SON of GOD, *John 1. 49.* and brought out of *Egypt, Mat. 2. 19.*

John Baptist was sent to prepare the Way before JESUS, and declared himself to be the predicted Messenger, who warned Men to repent, telling them the Kingdom of Heaven was at Hand, *Mat. 3.*

The

BUT notwithstanding all these were exactly answered in JESUS CHRIST; and altho' God had acquainted the *Jews* by many repeated Commands, Threats and Promises, with the Necessity of their receiving

OLD TESTAMENT.

NEW TESTAMENT.

The Messiah was to preach the Doctrine of Salvation in Galilee, *Isai.* 9.

JESUS preached the Kingdom of God in Galilee, *Mark* 1.

In his Days the Eyes of the Blind were to be opened, and the Ears of the Deaf unstopped, the Lame to leap, and the Tongue of the Dumb to sing, *Isai.* 35. 5, 6.

JESUS CHRIST caused the Blind to receive their Sight, the Lame to walk, the Deaf to hear, and the Dumb to speak, &c. *Matt.* 11. 5. and 15. 31.

He was to come to *Jerusalem* on an Afs, even a Colt the Fole of an Afs, *Zech.* 9. 9. and the People to cry, Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the LORD, *Psal.* 118. v. 26.

JESUS did ride into *Jerusalem* on a Colt the Fole of an Afs, and Multitudes of People attended him, crying Hosanna! Blessed is the King of Israel who cometh in the Name of the LORD, *John* 12.

He was to be despised and rejected, a Man of Sorrow and acquainted with Grief, *Isai.* 53. 3.

JESUS CHRIST was despised and rejected by the Jews, *John* C. 8, and C. 9. had no where to lay his Head, *Mat.* 8. 20. and his Soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto Death, *Mat.* 26. 38. *Luke* 22. 44.

He was to be betrayed and sold for thirty Pieces of Silver, which was to be cast to the Potter, *Zech.* 11. 12, 13.

Judas betrayed Jesus into the Hands of his Enemies, who covenanted with him for thirty Pieces of Silver, with which they purchased the Potter's Field, *Mat.* 27. 7.

He

ing him as their King and Lawgiver, and the happy Effects of their so doing, and also

OLD TESTAMENT.

He was to be wounded for our Transgressions and bruised for our Iniquities. The Chastisement of our Peace was to be upon him, the Iniquities of us all laid upon him, and with his Stripes we were to be healed. Tho' afflicted and oppressed he opened not his Mouth, and tho' brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter, yet as a Sheep before her Sheerers is dumb, so he opened not his Mouth, *Isai. 53. 5, 6, 7.*

The Messiah was to be taken from Prison and from Judgment, and cut off from the Land of the Living for the Sins of the People, *Isai. 53. 8, 9.*

He was to be numbered amongst the Transgressors, *Isai. 53. 12.*

They were to pierce his Hands and his Feet, *Psal. 22. 16,*

NEW TESTAMENT.

The Jews smote JESUS, *Mark 15. 19.* he was scourged, *Mat. 27. 26.* he suffered for our Sins, *1 Pet. 2. 21.* He bore our Sins in his own Body on the Cross, and with his Stripes we are healed, *V. 24.* And when he was accused and cruelly treated by the chief Priests, he answered nothing, *Mat. 27. 12, 14.*

JESUS CHRIST was carried as a Prisoner to the High Priest's House and from thence to the Hall of Judgment, *John 18. 28.* and after he was condemned at the Judgment-Seat of Pilate, they led him away and crucified him, *Mat. 27.* And he died for the Sins of the People according to the Scriptures, *1 Cor. 15. 3.*

JESUS was condemned as a Malefactor, *John 19. 16.* and crucified between two Thieves, *Luke 23. 33.*

They nailed the Hands and the Feet of JESUS to the Cross, *Mat. 27. 35.* And he shewed the Prints of the Nails in his Hands and Feet to his Disciples after his Resurrection, *Luke 24. 40.*

Not

also the dreadful Consequences that must follow their rejecting him, and refusing Obedience to his Laws, yet they not only did

OLD TESTAMENT.

NEW TESTAMENT.

Not a Bone of the Paschal Lamb was to be broken, *Ex. 12. 46.*

JESUS was that Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sins of the World, *John 1. 29, 36.* And when they had broken the Legs of those that were crucified with JESUS, they brake not his Legs, seeing he was already dead, *John 19. 33.*

They were to look at him whom they pierced, *Zech. 12. 10.*

One of the Soldiers pierced JESUS with a Spear, *John 19. 34.* and after this they sat down and watched him, *Mat. 27. 36.*

Those who beheld him should laugh him to Scorn, shoot out their Lips and shake their Heads at him, saying, He trusted in the LORD that he would deliver him, seeing he delighted in him, *Psal. 22. 8.*

The Scribes and Pharisees did precisely so to JESUS CHRIST, *Mat. 27. 42, 43.*

That they gave him Gall to eat, and Vinegar to drink, *Psal. 69. 21.*

They gave JESUS Vinegar mingled with Gall, *Mat. 27. 34.*

That they should part his Garments among them, and cast Lots upon his Vesture, *Psal. 22. 18.*

The Soldiers did so by the Garments of JESUS, *John 19. 23*

That the HOLY ONE of GOD should not be left in the Grave, nor suffer Corruption, *Psal. 16. 10.*

JESUS CHRIST was confessed to be the HOLY ONE of GOD, *Mark 1. 24.* And proved to be so by his Resurrection from the Grave the third Day, *Act. 2. 32.*

When

did reject him, but proved his Betrayers
and Murderers: and what is still more

K strange

OLD TESTAMENT.

When God should make his
Soul an Offering for Sin, he
should see his Seed and pro-
long his Days, and the Plea-
sure of the LORD should pro-
sper in his Hand, *Isai. 53. 10.*

He was to ascend on High,
lead Captivity Captive, and
receive Gifts for Men, *Psal.*
68. 18. Should bear the Sins
of Many, and make Inter-
cession for the Transgressors,
Isaiah 53. 12. And that his
Throne should be for ever and
ever, and the Sceptre of Righ-
teousness be the Sceptre of his
Kingdom, *Psal. 45.*

NEW TESTAMENT.

JESUS CHRIST offered his
own Life as a Sacrifice, *Eph.*
5. 2. i. e. a Sacrifice for Sin,
Heb. 9 And a Voice from
Heaven proclaimed that in
him God was well pleased,
Mat. 17. 5. And behold he is
alive for ever more, *Rev. 1. 18.*
vested with all Power both in
Heaven and Earth, *Mat. 28.*
18. will be with his Church
even to the End of the World,
V. 20. so that the Gates of
Hell shall never prevail a-
gainst it, *Mat. 16. 18.* and will
give them eternal Life so that
they shall never perish, neither
shall any pluck them out of
his Hand, *John 10. 28.*

JESUS CHRIST ascended up
into Heaven and is set on the
Right Hand of God, *Mark*
16. 19. It was not possible
for him to be holden of Death
and the Grave, *Act. 2. 24.*
But when he had vanquished,
these, and ascended into Hea-
ven, he gave such wondrous
Gifts to Men as enabled them
to speak in new Languages,
and work mighty Miracles in
his Name, *Act. 5. 12.* and *6. 8,*
&c. He now maketh Intercessi-
on for us at the right Hand
of God, *Heb. 7. 25. Rom. 8. 27.*
His Kingdom consisteth of
Righteousness, &c. *Rom. 14. 17.*
Heb. 1. 8. And this JESUS who
came in the Flesh, is over all
God blessed for ever, *Rom. 9. 5.*

strange, their Posterity still continue in Unbelief.

BUT GOD, who saw the Hearts of Men at the remotest Futurity, and knew all the Circumstances that should contribute to the glorious Scheme of Man's Redemption, foresaw that so it would be, and forewarned them of their Obstinacy, by telling them that *Hearing, they should hear and not understand, and see but not perceive*, Isai. vi. 9. and CHRIST plainly declared to them their having verified that Prediction, when (speaking of himself) he told them, that *Seeing they did not see, and hearing they did not understand*, Mat. xiii. 13.

AND altho' we cannot discern all the good Effects, which the Wisdom of Providence hath raised from this strange Infidelity, Obstinacy and Rebellion of his chosen People, yet we cannot but consider the present Condition of that dispersed and despised Nation, as a Punishment inflicted on them for forsaking the GOD of their Fathers, betraying and murdering the MESSIAH, and rejecting the gracious Terms of Salvation, which GOD from the

Be-

Beginning intended to offer them and all Mankind in JESUS CHRIST.

IN this Conclusion we cannot but be confirmed, if we attend to that Covenant which GOD was pleased to make with *Abraham*, and afterwards to renew with the whole Body of the *Israelites* under *Moses*.

“ FROM * that Time they became the
 “ peculiar People of GOD, as will appear
 “ from the Terms of the Covenant; they
 “ were to take GOD for their Sovereign
 “ LORD, and to be obedient to the Laws
 “ which he gave them: And GOD on his
 “ Part promised them temporary Blessings
 “ and his almighty Protection, so long as
 “ they should adhere to the Terms and
 “ Conditions stipulated on their Part. By
 “ Virtue of this Covenant they acknow-
 “ ledged GOD for their King; and GOD
 “ by his Deputies or Viceroyes, the Pro-
 “ phets, Judges, and Kings, governed
 “ them as his Subjects. *Moses*, the Me-
 “ diator of this Covenant was the first of
 “ those Deputies, and the MESSIAH (that
 K 2 “ great

* West on the Resurrection.

“ great Prophet, of whom he made mention to them) was to be the last.” Till his Coming they continued the only distinguished People of God; but now a new and better Covenant under his Mediation was to take Place.

“ THIS Covenant was to be offered by him first indeed to the *Jews*, with whom the Covenant mediated by *Moses* was ’till then to be in Force; but the other was not to be limited to them only.” The Sceptre was not to depart from *Judah*, until *SHILOH* come, but unto him there was to be a gathering together of the People.

“ ALL Nations upon Earth, tho’ they had not been Parties to the former Covenant, were to be invited to accede to this; the People were now to be gathered together, and all Mankind, who should acknowledge the *MESSIAH* as a King appointed by God to reign over them, and submit to his Laws, were to be admitted into the Covenant, and be thenceforth reputed the People of God. And as the Limits of this divine Empire were

“ were to be enlarged, so the Terms of
 “ his Covenant were to be enlarged also.

“ THE ceremonial Law given by *Moses*,
 “ was national and local; most of the Du-
 “ ties thereby prescribed being confined to
 “ the holy Land, and even to the holy
 “ City *Jerusalem*: And altho’ some such
 “ religious Bond seemed necessary to keep
 “ and continue the *Jews* a separate and pe-
 “ culiar People of GOD, yet the Gentiles
 “ (*viz.* all the Ends of the Earth) who
 “ were to be taken into the new Covenant,
 “ could not possibly conform therewith.
 “ It was therefore necessary this should be
 “ abolished. But the moral Law, the Ba-
 “ sis and End of the former Covenant, was
 “ to be the Basis and End of the new one.

“ To this Part both *Jews* and *Gentiles*,
 “ (however remote from the holy Land)
 “ could yield Obedience, as well as to
 “ those other Terms super-added to the
 “ new Covenant, *i. e.* the acknowledging
 “ the MESSIAH for their King, and admit-
 “ ting Baptism as the Token of their Al-
 “ legiance and Accession to this Covenant,
 “ and the Celebration of the LORD’S Sup-
 “ per

“ per from Time to Time, as the Memo-
 “ rial of the Sealing this Covenant on the
 “ Part of G^{OD}, by the Death of J^{ESUS}
 “ C^HRIST. These may properly be called
 “ the ceremonial Law of the Christian Co-
 “ venant, as Circumcision and the other
 “ ritual Duties were of the *Jews*.

“ OF the twelve Tribes of *Israel*, who
 “ were Parties to the *Mosaical* Covenant,
 “ ten fell at once from their Allegiance to
 “ G^{OD} under *Jeroboam*, and ceasing from
 “ that Time to be the People or Subjects
 “ of G^{OD}, he ceased to be their King,
 “ and withdrawing his Protection suffered
 “ them to be carried away into a Captivity
 “ from whence they never after returned,
 “ but were lost and confounded with the
 “ Nations among whom they were trans-
 “ planted.

“ FROM henceforth the remaining Tribes
 “ were the only distinguished People of
 “ G^{OD}, and as such (tho’ often punished
 “ by G^{OD} for their frequent Transgression
 “ of his Laws, and even carried Captive
 “ into *Babylon*) were by his Providence
 “ brought back again to the Land of *Ca-*
 “ *naan*,

“ *naan*, and restored to the Capacity of
 “ complying with the Terms of their Co-
 “ venant, by rebuilding the City and
 “ Temple of *Jerusalem*.

“ FROM this Time they were very exact
 “ in the Observance of the ceremonial
 “ Law of *Moses*, but had most grossly cor-
 “ rupted the moral Law, and rendered it
 “ (as CHRIST told them) of no Effect, by
 “ the Comments and Traditions of their
 “ *Scribes and Pharisees*.”

FROM their Attachment to what they
 esteemed the Law of *Moses*, they presumed
 on the Favour of God, and could not, or
 would not discern the spiritual Sense in
 which the Dominion of the MESSIAH was
 to extend to all the Corners of the Earth,
 but vainly looked upon themselves as the
 sole Heirs of the Promises made to *Abra-
 ham*, and to *David* (so often repeated and
 confirmed by their Prophets) so that at
 the Time of CHRIST's Coming, they ex-
 pected the MESSIAH to appear as a tem-
 poral invincible Prince, who was not
 only to deliver them from their Subjection
 to the *Roman Power*, but by Feats of Arms
 and

and martial Prowess, to trample all their Enemies under Foot, and subdue all the Nations and Powers of the Earth to the Empire of the *Jews*, as the sole Favourites of Heaven, and only destin'd Lords of the Universe.

THE same Blindness which kept them from perceiving the spiritual Intent and Meaning of the ceremonial Institutions of the *Mosaical* Law, and the Sense in which all the Nations of the Earth were to be blessed in the Seed of *Abraham*, and in which the Throne of *David* was to be of perpetual Duration, kept them also from seeing that their rejecting JESUS CHRIST, the MESSIAH, from being their King and Law-giver, would be the Cause of God's rejecting them from being his People.

“ THIS was the wretched State of the
 “ *Jews* when JESUS CHRIST came to offer
 “ them a new Covenant. The State of
 “ the *Gentiles* (*viz.* all the Rest of Man-
 “ kind) was still more deplorable; they
 “ had for many Ages transferred their
 “ Obedience from the supream God the
 “ Creator of Heaven and Earth, to his
 “ Creatures

“ Creatures, or to Deities of their own de-
 “ vising, under whose imaginary Protecti-
 “ on, they had ranged themselves by
 “ Nations and Communities, and had, al-
 “ most in the same Sense as the *Israelites*
 “ were stiled the People of GOD, become
 “ the People of their particular Idols, viz.
 “ the *Egyptian Isis*, the *Affyrian Belus*, the
 “ *Athenian Pallas*, the *Capitolian Jove*, &c.

“ BUT there was this further Differ-
 “ ence between them; the GOD of the
 “ *Israelites*, as an equitable and righteous
 “ Sovereign, had given his People a Law,
 “ to be the Rule of their Obedience, or
 “ rather enforced that original Law, which
 “ from the Beginning he had written in
 “ their Hearts, *i. e.* the Reason of all Man-
 “ kind, adding to it such other Instituti-
 “ ons as their particular Situation requir-
 “ ed: While the Gentiles, having by
 “ their Idolatry fallen from their Obe-
 “ dience to that original Law, were left
 “ thence forward like Outlaws and Rebels,
 “ to frame to themselves such Rules,
 “ both moral and religious, as their own
 “ perverted Reason should suggest.

L

“ HENCE

“ HENCE it came to pass that they were
 “ over-run with Immorality and Supersti-
 “ tion. And altho’ some of the wisest a-
 “ mongst them, by attending more close-
 “ ly to the Dictates of right Reason, had
 “ been sensible of some of their greatest
 “ Errors, and endeavoured to reform
 “ some Abuses, yet Superstition had tak-
 “ en such strong Hold of the Majority,
 “ that ’till this was rooted out, it was im-
 “ possible to bring them back to the Reli-
 “ gion of Nature, *i. e.* the Religion of
 “ Reason. For, besides the Prejudices of
 “ their established Faith, many religious
 “ Rites and Ceremonies, either by Pre-
 “ scription, or the Policy of Legislators,
 “ were become interwoven with the Ad-
 “ ministration of civil Affairs in such a
 “ a manner, that the Worship of their
 “ false Deities was become not only an
 “ essential Part of the Constitution, but
 “ even the great Engine of Government in
 “ divers great Kingdoms and States ; for
 “ Instance, Omens and Oracles amongst
 “ the *Greeks*, and Auspieces, Auguries
 “ and Sacrifices, either of Propitiation or
 “ Thankf-

“Thanksgiving, were on many Occasions
 “employed amongst the *Romans*.

“ON this Account the *Roman* Emper-
 “ors, who had appropriated to themselves
 “the whole Authority of the Empire,
 “formerly divided among several Officers,
 “took upon them the Title of *Pontifex*
 “*Maximus* (chief Priest) comprehending
 “under that Title, the Authority of being
 “Judge and Arbitrator both of civil and
 “religious Affairs; so that the Policy of
 “the State and the Duty of the Magistrate
 “were fatally combined with the Zeal
 “and Superstition of their false Religion.

“IN this State of Things for those wise
 “Men, who had discovered their Impro-
 “priety, to have attempted a thorough
 “Reformation of the Errors they had per-
 “ceived, would have been a Work ex-
 “treamly arduous and dangerous. And
 “if we may allow them to have arrived at
 “so great a Degree of Knowledge in the
 “Religion of Nature in all it's Branches,
 “as some, since *Christianity* hath been re-
 “vealed, have pretended to be, and even
 “if they had attacked the Superstition of

“ the Times with all the Industry and In-
 “ trepidity of the Apostles, it is much to
 “ be questioned whether with all their E-
 “ loquence and Logic they would have
 “ gained any considerable Victory. Such
 “ was the dark and hopeless State of the
 “ *Gentiles* at the Time of our LORD’s Ap-
 “ pearance.

“ IN this State both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*
 “ (as before described) Our SAVIOUR, af-
 “ ter having represented to the former un-
 “ der the Parable of a certain Householder,
 “ who planted a Vineyard and let it out to
 “ Husbandmen, the righteous Dealings of
 “ GOD to them, and the ill Returns they
 “ had made to him, not only by refusing
 “ him the Fruits, but by murdering the
 “ Servants he had sent to demand them,
 “ and last of all his Son; and having got-
 “ ten from them a Confession that those
 “ wicked Husbandmen ought to be miser-
 “ ably punished, and the Vineyard taken
 “ from them and given to other Husband-
 “ men, who should render him the Fruits
 “ in their Season, he addressed them as
 “ as follows. *Did you never read in the*
Script-

Scriptures, the Stone which the Builders rejected, the same is become the Head of the Corner ? This is the LORD's Doing, and it is marvelous in our Eyes ? Therefore I say unto you, the Kingdom of GOD shall be taken from you, and given to a Nation bringing forth the Fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this Stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to Powder.

“ BY these Words of our LORD are signified, first the transferring the Kingdom of GOD from the *Jews* to the *Gentiles*, secondly the Obedience of the *Gentiles*, and thirdly the miserable Punishment of the *Jews*, for their rejecting and murdering the SON of GOD.

“ Now the Kingdom of GOD (as may be collected from what is abovesaid) denotes the spiritual and moral Dominion of GOD over moral Subjects, *i. e. free Agents*; and by the People of GOD are signified such *free Agents* as freely and voluntarily acknowledge the Sovereignty of GOD, by worshiping him and obeying his Laws, whether natural or

“ re-

“ revealed, which appears to them to have
 “ been enacted by him.

“ THE *Jews* therefore by rejecting JESUS
 “ CHRIST, who proved himself to be the
 “ MESSIAH commissioned and sent from
 “ GOD, not only from the Testimony of
 “ *Moses* and all the Prophets, the Holiness
 “ of his Life and Doctrines, and the num-
 “ berless Miracles he wrought amongst
 “ them, but still more plainly if possible,
 “ by his rising from the Dead, and im-
 “ powering his Disciples to work the same
 “ Signs and Wonders in his Name. The
 “ *Jews* I say, as a Nation, by rejecting this
 “ Messenger, this Son of GOD, and refusing
 “ to receive those Laws which he proposed
 “ to them in his Father's Name, evident-
 “ ly renounced their Allegiance to GOD,
 “ and ceased to be his People or Subjects.
 “ ON the other Hand, the *Gentiles* (such
 “ of them however as renounced their
 “ Vices and idolatrous Superstitions, and
 “ and returned to the Worship of GOD,
 “ and received the MESSIAH, together
 “ with the Laws which he proposed to
 “ them in the Name of GOD) as evidently
 “ put

“ put themselves under the Protection of
 “ GOD, acknowledged his Sovereignty,
 “ and became his People or Subjects: And
 “ hence appears what is meant by the
 “ the Kingdom of GOD being taken from
 “ the *Jews*, and given to the *Gentiles*:
 “ GOD removed the Throne whereon *Da-*
 “ *vid* and his Posterity had sat as his Sub-
 “ stitutes and Viceroy, from amongst the
 “ *Jews*, who renounced his Authority,
 “ and from Earth to Heaven, and placing
 “ it at his right Hand, and setting upon
 “ it the MESSIAH, his only Son, gave him
 “ for his Subjects, not one Nation only,
 “ but all Nations, Kindreds and People,
 “ even all the Ends of the Earth for his
 “ Dominion.

“ THAT the Kingdom of GOD was in
 “ this Sense and in this Manner transfer-
 “ red from the *Jews* to the *Gentiles* is too
 “ notorious to need any Proof.

“ THE Former as a Nation rejected the
 “ Gospel, and persisted in their Refusal of
 “ the MESSIAH, 'till the final Destruction
 “ of their holy City and Temple, and
 “ what is more strange, 'till persist in
 “ their

“ their Obstinacy, whereas the *Gentiles*
 “ embraced it so generally, that within a
 “ few Centuries after CHRIST almost the
 “ whole *Roman Empire*, *i. e.* almost the
 “ then known World forsook Idolatry and
 “ became Christian. And GOD on his Part
 “ testified that he entered into Covenant
 “ with them, and accepted their Allegi-
 “ ance, by pouring on them the Gifts of
 “ his holy Spirit; as on the other Hand
 “ he signified his Renunciation of the
 “ *Mosaical Covenant*, by not only suffer-
 “ ing the Seat of his Empire, the City and
 “ Temple of *Jerusalem* to be utterly de-
 “ stroyed, and by permitting the *Jews* to
 “ be wholly banished from the holy Land,
 “ and scattered over the Face of the Earth:
 “ THEIR Calamities prove that the MES-
 “ SIAH is come and they have rejected
 “ him; and their yet continued Prefer-
 “ vation demonstrates that GOD hath not
 “ rejected them for ever. By both they
 “ declare that JESUS is the promised SA-
 “ VIOUR, that their Misery proceeds from
 “ their not having known him, and that
 “ the only Hope they have left is that
 “ they

“ they shall one Day come to the Knowledge of him.”

THUS the mention of God's rejecting the *Jews* is not to be understood as an universal and final Rejection of all the Descendants of *Abraham* after the Time of CHRIST's Coming, but the rebellious and unbelieving Part of them only; for there hath still been a Remnant of Believers amongst them, who have accepted the Terms of Salvation offered by the MESSIAH, and there is no Doubt but the whole Body of them will at some Time hereafter believe and return to their Allegiance. Why they are so long permitted to remain under a State of Blindness and Disbelief, why the ALMIGHTY permits so great an Interval between the faithful Fathers of his once chosen People, and their Posterity which will hereafter become faithful also, it does not behove us to enquire.

KNOWN unto GOD are all his Works from the Beginning to the End of Time. He hath set Bounds to the Infidelity of the *Jews* as well as to the Ingratitude of the Gentiles. His Mercy and his Justice suc-

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ceed each other ; and though it is not for us to know at what Time he will execute what he hath promised to the latest Posterity of *Israel* any farther than he hath thought fit to reveal, yet we may rest assured that he permits nothing to fall on any Part of Mankind but what shall be productive of good Effects in the Course of his Providence: And whatever God may have determined concerning them, we on our Parts have the Comfort to find that the promised MESSIAH hath already appeared, and that whosoever believeth on him and becometh obedient to his Laws, whether *Jew* or *Gentile*, is accepted of God, and made an Heir to the Promises, and will be a Partaker of Blessings reserved for the People of God.-----That JESUS CHRIST the Son of the living God is that promised MESSIAH, the Prince of Peace, the Lord of Life and Glory, the Restorer of Mankind, and the Desire of all Nations, in whom all the Promises of God are Yea and Amen.-----That this divine SAVIOUR took upon him the human Nature, conversed with Mankind, and gave himself a
Sacrifice

Sacrifice for the Sins of the whole World.

----That he arose from the Dead and ascended into the Mansions of the Blessed, where he ever liveth to make Intercession with God his Father, for penitent and reformed Sinners.-----That he is the Way and the Truth and the Life, and that there is none other Name under Heaven given amongst Men by whom we may Hope for Salvation.-----That his Life is our Example and his Gospel our infallible Guide to Peace and Comfort here, and to never-ceasing Glory and Happiness hereafter; so that our Duty and our Destination now lies plain before us.

THE Obscurity under which the Notion of a Resurrection from the Dead and a future State of Rewards to Virtue and Punishments to Vice, seems to have been veiled in the Scriptures of the *Old Testament*, is now wholly removed, and the Reality of them clearly revealed by the Gospel, and confirmed to us by the Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST.

WHEN a Doctrine so important and interesting as that of a future State of exqui-

site Bliss or Misery is offered to our Consideration, and left to our Choice, and we are assured that the one or the other will unavoidably be our Lot, according to our Conduct in this Life, we cannot but earnestly wish to know by what Means we may escape the one, and obtain the other.

WHEN we find that true GOODNESS is the Image of God in our Souls; that our Happiness depends on our Conformity to his Likeness, as far as our feeble Powers will extend; that Nothing can secure us the divine Favour, and entitle us to real Happiness without the Practice of true Piety and solid Virtue, it must of Necessity incline every sober Mind to seek and pursue such a Course of Life, as will render its Condition best and safest, and to enquire what those Laws and Precepts are, which God hath set forth for our Guide and Direction.

BUT the Consciousness of our being guilty Creatures, by having transgressed those Laws, and the Consideration of our own Frailty and Inability, whereby, notwithstanding our best Resolutions to the
contrary,

contrary, we are still liable in many Particulars to deviate from the strict Paths of Virtue, must unavoidably create Doubts and Disquietude in our Minds, and prove a Discouragement to our Progress in a virtuous Course.

THIS without some Promises and Hopes of Mercy from GOD, and some Means of recovering his Favour after Lapses, would render our Condition in Life desperate, and tempt us to consider even the Evils that befall us here as certain Marks of the divine Vengeance and our Reprobation from GOD: But the *Christian Revelation* effectually removes our Doubts and Anxieties on this Account, by informing us that this Life is our State of Probation, not of Retribution.-----That altho' GOD suffers Crosses and Calamities to befall us here to answer various wise and good Ends of his Providence unperceived by us; yet we are to consider the severest Dispensation of his Judgment (or rather Discipline) of us in this Life, only as Accessaries to those of his Benevolence; so that whether he permits Evil or Good to fall upon us, still it proceeds

proceeds from the Bowels of his Love, and in his faithful Provision for our truest Interest.----That all Things work together for Good to those that love him.-----That not even an Hair of our Heads shall fall to the Ground without the Permission of our heavenly Father-----And that if we patiently persevere in well-doing, our transient Afflictions in this Life will work for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory in that which is to come.

INDEED, as the Miseries which happen to Mankind here, seem to fall indiscriminately both on the Virtuous and the Wicked, it may to us have the Appearance of unequal Dealing from God to Men; but by the *Christian Revelation* we are assured that in a future Life all these seeming Inequalities will be set right, and a suitable Distinction be made between good and bad Men: And for our still greater Consolation, to raise our drooping Hope, and renew our Endeavours of better Obedience after actual Transgression of God's Laws, it declares to us that penitent and reformed Sinners will be considered

dered by God amongst the good and virtuous Part of Mankind.-----That notwithstanding our natural Frailty, and the Temptations we have to struggle with, our blessed Redeemer hath not left us helpless in this our State of Trials and Difficulty, nor ceased when he ascended up into Heaven to succour and protect us on Earth; but hath fulfilled the gracious Promise he made to his Disciples of sending us a Comforter, even the Holy Ghost, who continually mediates with us in his Behalf here, whilst he on ours is mediating with God his Father in Heaven: And having this sanctifying Spirit to assist us, the Gospel to direct us, and our LORD's most holy Life for our Example, if we are not wanting to ourselves, we cannot fail of conducting our Lives in such a Way as God for his Sake will certainly accept and reward.

WE have moreover the Comfort to find that he who is our Protector on Earth and our Advocate in Heaven, he, who both knows and pities our Infirmities, and regards us with the most perfect Love, is
also

also to be our final Judge-----That all Power both in Heaven and Earth is given to him, so that he is able to save to the uttermost all that come to GOD by him, and who laid down his own Life as the Propitiation for the Sins of all that believe and repent and reform their Lives according to his Gospel; and will at last receive them into his glorious Kingdom, where they shall be far removed from all Pain and Grief and Disquietude, and inherit those Mansions of Happiness which from the Beginning were prepared for the Saints of GOD. Such are the happy Advantages, such the gracious Terms of Salvation offered to Mankind under the new Covenant, such the Doctrines of the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST.

Is it then to be wondered that the thoughtful and the wise, the honest and best disposed Part of Mankind should embrace the Religion which he proposed? Can any one seriously consider the Laws and Precepts of the *Christian Religion*, without being sensible of their Utility and admiring their Perfection, or without confessing

feeling that Nothing could have been devised more worthy of human Reason and Regard, more correspondent with the Nature of Mankind, or more effectual to their Peace and Well-being.

THE Documents it gives for preserving to our Reason it's natural Prerogative and proper Influence, so as not to suffer the sensual and brutish Part of our Nature to usurp and govern us, so as not to be enslaved by Passion, or misled by Fancy, to engage and persevere in any Thing unworthy of our Dignity, or destructive of our Happiness and the Means provided to restore us to the divine Favour after casual Deviation from our Duty, must convince every sober and unprejudiced Man, that Nothing less than divine Wisdom and Love, could have devised so excellent, so amiable and incomparable a Religion as that which was taught by JESUS CHRIST; a Religion which connects our Duty with our Happiness, by teaching us that the Practice of those very Things which tend to the Peace, Tranquility, Harmony and Felicity of Mankind in this Life, will

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through him who loved us and gave himself for us, convey us to never-ceasing Happiness in a Life that shall succeed it; and that whilst we seek for Glory and Immortality in the pleasant and peaceful Paths of Piety and Virtue, all our unavoidable Errors and Imperfections, will for his sake be graciously over-looked and pardoned.

THE same invaluable Records, which have conveyed to us these salutary Doctrines, have also preserved the History of JESUS CHRIST and his Apostles, by whom they were made known to the World, and the wonderful Circumstances that attended their Ministration. Can we then bestow too much Time in reading, meditating and understanding the Writings of the New Testament, or too much Diligence in practising the Duties they recommend? Many of the Facts and Transactions they relate are indeed very extraordinary and wonderful; but they come attested with such irresistible Proof and Evidence of Truth, such indisputable Marks of divine Authority, that if we believe

lieve there ever was such a Person as *JESUS* of *Nazareth* upon Earth, which no one pretends to deny ; and if we believe that the Relation we read of him in the Books of the New Testament was really written by the Persons whose Names they bear, (and for which we have the concurrent Testimony of all those ecclesiastical Writers who lived in, and immediately after their Times) we have all the Reason in the World to believe the Facts and Miracles they have recorded to be true, and the Doctrines they taught to be of divine original.

WE cannot, when with unprejudiced Minds we read their Writings, but believe that in the Reign of the *Roman Emperor Augustus*, there was a Child born at *Bethlehem* of *Judah*, of obscure Parents indeed, but whose Birth was made remarkable by many extraordinary Tokens and Circumstances agreeing with the Predictions and Prophecies contained in the *Jewish Scriptures* concerning the *MESSIAH* or *SAVIOUR* of Mankind, who had been so long and often promised by *GOD*, and at that Time

generally expected among the *Jews*---That *Herod* the then King of *Judea*, alarmed at the strange Reports he heard concerning him (and especially at the Relation of the *Eastern Magi*, who had been conducted so far from their own Country by a celestial Luminary to see and pay Homage to the heavenly Babe) that he might make sure of his Destruction, ordered a general Massacre of all the Children in *Bethlehem*, at, and under the Age of two Years; but that the Providence of the ALMIGHTY by the Message of an Angel from Heaven preserved him from his Fury, causing him to be suddainly removed into a distant Region, and in the same extraordinary Manner after *Herod's* Death brought him back and replaced him amongst the *Jews*----That as he advanced in Years, his uncommon *Wisdom* and *Understanding* astonished their most learned Doctors, and that he publicly taught in their Synagogues-----That his Life was holy and exemplary-----That he was zealous for GOD and Religion, and universally tender and benevolent to Mankind-----That he was constantly employed in

in Works of Piety, Charity and Beneficence, feeding the Hungry, instructing the Ignorant, reproofing the Wicked, encouraging the Virtuous, comforting the Afflicted, and relieving the Distresses of all that sought his Pity-----That he declared himself to be the SON of GOD, and that he was sent by GOD his Father to cancel the ceremonial Law of *Moses*, and to establish and confirm the moral Law, to reform Mankind, to bring them to a more perfect Knowledge of GOD, to teach them a better Rule of Life, and a more excellent Way of Worship, than what was then practised among them, shewing them wherein true Religion consisted, and convincing them by undeniable Tokens, that he knew all Things, even the most secret Thoughts and Intentions of the Hearts of Men, and telling them plainly that he was the very MESSIAH, of whom the Scriptures made mention, and declaring to them, that whosoever believed on him, and kept his Sayings, should never perish, but have everlasting Life-----That he foretold to them many important future Events,

vents, particularly his own Death and Resurrection, the Destruction of the City and Temple of *Jerusalem*, and the Distresses of its Inhabitants, and the miserable Calamities that would happen to the *Jews*, in the Circumstances that afterward befell them, and informed them of the Cause of those approaching Miseries-----That he wrought many astonishing Miracles to convince them of his divine Power and Authority, so that the People were beyond Measure astonished at the mighty Power of God: For at his Word he gave Sight to the Blind, and Speech to the Dumb that had been so from their Birth, made the Lame to walk, the Deaf to hear, restored the Sick, healed the Lepers, raised the Dead from the Grave, and restored them to Life again, walked on the Waves of the Sea, fed and satisfied Thousands of People with a few Loaves and small Fishes, and did numberless other wonderful Works, which no other besides him ever did, and that his Word went forth with Power, and he taught the People as one having Authority, and not as the Scribes.

That

That by these Means he drew great Numbers of People after him, either as Spectators of his Miracles, Partakers of his Beneficence, or Followers of his Doctrines, and that the Multitudes were beyond Measure astonished both at his Doctrine and Power, confessing they had never seen it in this Manner, declaring their Belief that God had visited his People, and that JESUS was of a Truth that Prophet which should come into the World, even the Son of the Living God-----That the chief Priests and Governors of the *Jewish* State grew jealous of his Designs, apprehended him as a Seducer of the People and an Enemy to the established Religion, and under these Charges prevailed on *Pontius Pilate* the *Roman* Governor, to condemn him to the painful and ignominious Death of the Cross, and took Care that he should suffer with all the Aggravations of Shame and Disgrace in the Sight of all the People of *Jerusalem*-----That when the People would have made him their King, he refused the Offer, telling them plainly that his Kingdom was not of this World.-----

That

That when he was carried before the Judgment Seat, the Judge himself bore Testimony of his Innocence, declaring that he found no Fault in him, and with Fear and Reluctance delivered him up for Execution, telling them he was innocent of the Blood of this just Person----- That at the Instant of his Death Nature itself seemed to be in Agitation, the Veil of the Temple at *Jerusalem* was rent from the Top to the Bottom, the Earth trembled, the Rocks were torn asunder, the Sun was darkened, the Graves were opened, and many Bodies of departed Saints arose from their Tombs and appeared to many in the holy City----That the Officer who commanded the Guards, and those that were with him, when they saw these Wonders, were struck with Terror, and confessed, truly this was the Son of God ---That notwithstanding he was seen publicly to expire on the Cross, and was laid in a Sepulchre well secured, sealed and guarded by armed Men under strict Command, yet the third Day after his Crucifixion he was found risen from the Dead,
and

and his Grave thrown open by an Angel from Heaven, and that after his Resurrection he appeared to, and conversed with his Disciples, comforting them under their sad Affliction, and expounding to them the several Parts of the Writings of *Moses*, the Prophets, and the Psalms, which related to himself, telling them what they must suffer in this Life for his Sake, commanding them to preach the Gospel in all the World, and make Disciples to his Religion IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST, promising to be ever with them, even to the End of the World, so that the Gates of Hell should never prevail against his Church; and that after these Things he ascended into Heaven in the Sight of a great Number of Spectators ----- That after his Ascension, the Holy Ghost, that Comforter from Heaven which he had promised to send his Apostles, visibly descended on them in the Appearance of Fire, enduing them with amazing Gifts and Powers from on high, enabling them to perform the like Signs and Wonders

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ders as their LORD had done before them,
 and amongst other Particulars to preach
 the Gospel instantaneously in every differ-
 ent Language of their Auditors, from what
 Part of the Earth soever they came, to heal
 the Sick, to cleanse the Lepers, to cast
 out Demons, and the like, only by cal-
 ling upon his Name----That no Threats or
 Punishments (not even Death itself) were
 sufficient to shake their Stedfastness, or
 deter them from executing the Commands
 and propagating the Doctrines, which their
 LORD had committed to their Charge----
 That the Chief Priests and Elders of the
Jews, though they denied the principal
 Facts which the Apostles related and con-
 demned the Doctrines they taught were
 nevertheless unable to disprove the one,
 or to confute or suppress the other; but
 that Multitudes of People, convinced
 of the Truth of their Reports, and the
 Reasonableness of their Doctrines, conti-
 nually came over to the Religion they
 professed and taught, and readily relin-
 quished every Prospect of worldly Inter-
 est and Emolument, which opposed their
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becoming the Disciples of the Crucified
JESUS.

No unprejudiced Person can read over the Scriptures of the *Old Testament* with serious Attention, without discovering its Reference to the *New*, and perceiving the perfect Harmony and Agreement there is between the one and the other, and how necessary the one is to clear up the obscure and mysterious Passages of the other, or without concluding that the same divine Spirit, which inspired the holy Prophets in their Predictions and Revelations concerning the MESSIAH, did also inspire and assist the holy Apostles and Evangelists in what they have written concerning him and his Religion.

AND whoever thus reads their Writings, and considers all the Circumstances that attended the Writers, cannot in the least question the Truth of what they have recorded; for, can any one suppose that a few illiterate and obscure Men, without any Prospect of worldly Interest to induce them, or any earthly Power whatever to encourage and support them; Men of such

approved Modesty and artless Honesty as they confessedly were, and who, in every Part of their Character and Conduct, had the strictest Regard to Integrity and Truth, universally allowed to be sober and inoffensive Persons, whose chief Aim and Concern apparently was the Advancement of genuine Piety and useful Morality in the World; Men, who professed to believe and teach a Resurrection from the Dead, and a future general Judgment, wherein every Man must give an Account of his own Works, and that wicked Men in general, and all Hypocrites and Liars in particular, would be doomed to a State of inexpressible Anguish and Torment--- I say, can any one suppose that such Men, would forsake all that was dear and valuable to them on Earth, and act in open Opposition to the established Religion, Laws and Government of their Country, and voluntarily expose themselves to Reproach, Contempt and Insult, and undergo, as they did, with Patience and Resignation, nay with Complacency and Triumph, the most cruel Tortures that human

man Malice could devise, or the Power of Tyrants inflict; and even dye Martyrs to a Falsehood of their own Invention?

MANY of the Miracles they have recorded, they affirmed to have been wrought in the most public Manner, in the Presence of great Numbers of Spectators, and even of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* their bitterest Enemies: And if no such Miracles as they mention had been performed, can any one imagine that the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* would not have taken effectual Means to disprove them, and to punish and silence the Impostors? And would not all sober Men have detested them for so impudent a Forgery?

FOR Instance, when it was affirmed by *St. Luke* of the Person who (as he declared) had been lame from his Cradle, and generally known to the Inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, by his having so long begged at the principal Gate of the Temple, that he was instantly cured by *St. Peter*, on his only invoking the Name of *JESUS*, which Miracle was so publicly known, that it

converted

converted no less than five thousand Persons to the Christian Faith ; if the Report of so remarkable a Story had been without a Foundation in Fact, the very Publication of it would have provoked thousands of People, nay the whole Nation of the *Jews*, and especially the Inhabitants of *Jerusalem* to contradict and silence it.

IN like Manner would the Relation of our LORD's feeding above five thousand Persons with five Loaves and a few little Fishes, have been confuted and disproved.

So also the Report of *St. Paul* when he affirmed that our LORD, after his Resurrection, appeared to above five hundred Brethren at one Time, the greater Part of whom he declared to be living at the Time he mentioned it ; had this been false, it is next to impossible it could escape the Shame of Detection ; and who, after this, would have given Credit to any Relation, or paid any the least Regard to the Doctrines preached to them as Truth by such a Person ? Especially when the Doctrines he taught were contradictory to their native Faith and established Religion.

AGAIN

AGAIN, when the Disciples affirmed that their LORD was risen from the Dead, the chief Priests and Elders gave out that they had stolen the Body from the Sepulchre whilst the Souldiers who had been set to guard it were asleep, and bribed the Souldiers to vouch their Report.

BUT if the Souldiers really were asleep how could they know the Disciples came and stole away the Body? Or how came it that they were not punished for so palpable a Neglect of Duty, and the Disciples for their Theft and Imposture?

SURELY the chief Priests and Rulers of the *Jews* might have gone further in the Matter than they did, if they had been true in what they affirmed: They were Men of high Reverence and Authority amongst the People, vested with the Power of the State, and consequently furnished with every Means of procuring Informations, and of gaining or extorting Confessions, and the Persons accused were Men of low Degree and slender Substance, without Power, without Learning, without any worldly Interest or Connections
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whatever to abett or support them : And can it be imagined that the chief Priests and Elders (against such helpless Men) would not have made a thorough Enquiry into a Report that they seemed so much concerned to contradict and suppress, had they been really persuaded that what the Disciples of Jesus had reported was not true? And if they had thus enquired into it, can we suppose, if it had been false, that out of so many Persons as must have been privy to it, no one of them all, either from a Regard to Justice and Truth, or out of the Fear of Punishment or the Hope of a Reward, would have betrayed the Secret, and given such Information as would have enabled the *Jewish* Rulers at once to destroy and put an End to the Belief of what the Disciples had reported? And if it had once been proved that they stole the Body of Jesus, would any one afterward have taken their Word for the Resurrection, or become Converts to a Religion which they knew to be founded on a proved notorious Falsehood?

BUT

BUT the Matter was so far otherwise, that the Disciples, conscious of no Fraud or Imposture on their Part, continued to and fro at *Jerusalem*, for the Space of forty Days after the Report of their having stolen the Body of their Master, was spread through the City; for though they departed after the Resurrection to meet him as he had appointed them, yet they returned again to *Jerusalem*, and publicly asserted to the Face of these their powerful and incensed Enemies, that GOD had indeed raised from the Dead that same JESUS whom they had crucified.

THE Consequence of this was, that they had them apprehended and brought before the Council for preaching through JESUS the Resurrection from the Dead.

BUT how did they proceed with them? Did they bring any charge against them, of their having stolen the Body of their crucified Master? No! we hear of Nothing like it: But on the contrary, being unable to gainsay the Testimony the Apostles gave of the Resurrection, by a Miracle just then performed by them in

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the Name of JESUS CHRIST, they ordered them to withdraw, and consulted together what they should do to them, warily observing that the notable Miracle now wrought by them was manifest to all the Dwellers at *Jerusalem*, so that it could not by any Means be denied; and therefore that it might spread no further, they agreed to call them back, and command them to teach no more in his Name.

THEY were accordingly remanded back before the Concil, and had this command given them. But so great was the Confidence of *Peter* and *John*, that they made them this plain and honest Reply; *Whether it be right in the Sight of GOD to hearken unto you more than to GOD, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the Things we have seen and heard.* So when they had further threatened them they let them go.

Now what Effect did their Threats and Commands produce? None truly, but such as served to prove their own Conscioufness, and the Truth of these injured Men; for they still continued openly to teach, and preach their former Doctrines, and

and daily brought over Numbers of Converts to their Persuasion.

AFTER all this, who could believe that the Disciples stole the Body of JESUS? Or even that the chief Priests and Elders themselves did not believe the contrary? Or what reasonable Men could otherwise conclude, than that the Miracle, then wrought by the Apostles in the Name of JESUS, could proceed from no other Power than that of GOD, and that GOD was indeed the Author and Favourer, as well of their Doctrines as of their Miracles?

MANY like Instances might be produced to prove the Truth of the Facts recorded by the Evangelists, and indeed the rapid Progress it made both amongst *Jews* and *Gentiles*, is a still further Proof of it.

WHEN we consider all these Things, and observe that the evangelical Writers were conversant with our LORD, and Eye-Witnesses to most of the Facts they mention, and the general Belief they obtained amongst the sober and unprejudiced Part of their Cotemporaries, notwithstanding the Combination of so much Art and Pow-

er to oppose and silence them, we may appeal to the common Sense and Reason of Mankind, whether it is possible for any Report or History to come attested with more various, more pregnant or more unquestionable Motives of Credibility, than the History of JESUS CHRIST and his Apostles, as recorded in the Books of the *New Testament*.

FOR, if the Facts had been at all confuted, who can suppose that such Multitudes of People, who lived in the very Time and on the very Spot where those Things are said to have been transacted, and knew what was done and said on both Sides, would have embraced a Religion, which they had any Reason to believe was founded on Falsity and Imposture? Was it so easy a Matter for Men to overcome the Prejudices of Education, and forsake the Religion of their Ancestors, and the established Profession of their Times, to forego all Views of worldly Pomp, Grandeur and Interest, and to expose themselves to public Persecution and all the Pains and Penalties of human Laws,
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for the Sake of a Religion, which they knew, or even doubted to have in Reality no good Foundation? And what could induce such vast Numbers of the next succeeding Ages, not only of the illiterate and credulous Vulgar, but of the wisest, most learned, and most considerable Men, upon the most scrupulous Enquiry into the Truth of Things, to become Converts to Christianity, even in Countries, where by their Laws it was capital to avow it; and which at the same Time excluded them from all Views of worldly Emolument, placed the Hopes of its Votaries beyond the Grave, and laid such Restraints on all the sensual Enjoyments, and darling Passions of Mankind, that under it they must abridge themselves of many Pleasures and Gratifications, which their former Religions allowed them freely to indulge? I say, what could induce them to embrace such a Religion, but the Evidence of its Truth and divine Authority? It could not have succeeded as it did, without this to recommend and support it.

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It was destitute of all Countenance and Support from the civil Powers, contradictory to the established Religions and Laws of States and Countries, averse to the favourite Passions and Inclinations, Views and Prejudices of Mankind, condemned by the *Jews*, ridiculed by the *Greeks* and *Romans*, and persecuted by them all. In short, it struggled with every Kind of worldly Resistance, and yet it bore down all Opposition, and became more and more prevalent the more it was opposed. So mightily grew the Word of God, and increased.

AND what, but the Assurance of the divine Favour and Support, could have animated and prevailed on the *Christian* Fathers, in the early Ages of Persecution, to stand forth with such Firmness and Intrepidity against their most formidable Adversaries, and challenge even Emperors, Kings and Senates, all the Arts of Philosophy, and all the Powers of human Eloquence and Policy to disprove or confute their Doctrines, or prevail on them to renounce their Profession?

Now,

Now, when we put all the afore-mentioned Circumstances together, and consider the *Christian* Religion with all the various Testimonies it carries, the Utility of its Precepts, and the Reasonableness of its Doctrines, its Analogy with the Course of human Nature, the supernatural Proof of undoubted Miracles, the Completion of numerous distant and unconnected Prophecies, the Capacity and Disinterestedness of its Witnesses, the wonderful and speedy Progress it made amongst all Ranks and Degrees of Men, and the Triumph it still holds in the World through a Series of every Kind of Opposition.

I say, when we consider all these Testimonies in their joint and united Strength, we cannot possibly doubt its divine Original, or that the same Almighty Power, by which it hath all along been protected and preserved, will still continue to protect and preserve it, even to the End of the World.

It might indeed have reasonably been expected, that a Religion so amiable and desirable, so productive of every solid
Comfort

Comfort and true Happiness of Mankind, would long since have become the universal Religion of the World; but God, to whose View all Things are open through the most distant Ages of Futurity, and who alone knows what Times and Circumstances are proper for the Accomplishment of every Purpose of his wise and good Providence, hath not thought fit to make known unto us the Time when this happy Event shall take Place, nor his particular Views in protracting it.

WE may however observe, that after the first Promises of sending a Redeemer into the World, God was pleased to let many Ages run on, and many remote Incidents to concur, to prepare Mankind for the *Christian Revelation*, before that Dispensation took Place, without disclosing to them the exact Time when it should be accomplished: And altho' we have good Reason to believe that the Religion of JESUS CHRIST, will at some Time be embraced by every Nation under Heaven, yet it is reasonable to suppose that this happy Crisis will gradually advance, and
be

be brought about by a Train of distant conspiring Events, so as not to take place 'till God in the Course of his Providence, shall have wrought and effected all the proper and suitable Circumstances for its Accomplishment ; and what these may be God only knows.

THE wonderful Progress of the Gospel in its Infancy, under all the Prejudice and Opposition both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, was (as is before mentioned) a Demonstration that it had the Support and Favour of the ALMIGHTY, and seemed to promise its speedy universal Prevalence ; but the proper Time was not yet come : It had other Prejudices to subdue, and other Obstacles to remove before it could universally prevail and appear in its proper Light of Evidence.

IN the early Ages of Christianity, the Notions which some of the Heathen Converts formed of their new Religion, were in many Respects very imperfect ; the Impressions of Pagan Superstition were in some hard to be overcome, and the Notions of heathenish Philosophy had a strong

Q Influence

Influence on Others, so that some of the principal Truths of the Gospel became perplexed and misrepresented. Hence arose the great Corruptions of Christianity, which soon prevailed: Hence proceeded Contentions and Disputations amongst the the Pastors and Teachers of CHRIST'S Religion, to the no small Disgrace and Disquietude of his Flock.

IN its more advanced State, the Doctors, of the Church entirely departed from the primitive Spirit of Christianity. Instead of adhering to the genuine Doctrines of the *New Testament*, they loaded and deformed Religion with Absurdities of their own Device, and introduced a crafty System of religious Polity, suited to the Views of worldly Ambition, Avarice and despotic Power.

INSTEAD of that amiable Meekness, Simplicity and Gentleness, and that sincere Concern for the Happiness of Mankind, which so eminently distinguished the Apostles and first Preachers of the Gospel, they usurped the Kingdom of CHRIST, and violated the Rights of his Subjects,

Subjects, arrogating to themselves the sole Authority of judging for all Men, and exacting an implicit Obedience to their arbitrary Decisions and Decrees under the most unchristian Censures and horrid Anathemas.

HENCE new Objections arose, and new Disputes succeeded. The Tendency of those Disputes hath been to open the Eyes of Mankind, and to lead them to distinguish Truth from Error, by teaching them to examine the holy Scriptures for themselves, and to draw their Religion from them only; and in all those Christian Countries where the free Use of the sacred Volumes is allowed, most of those Absurdities, wherewith ignorant or designing Men had deformed the Doctrines of Christianity, have been properly exposed and refuted, and every such Discovery hath made our holy Religion appear still more amiable and excellent in the Opinion of sober and reasonable Men.

BUT still the Professors of Christianity are in general far from having attained to that Degree of Christian Perfection and

pious Regularity, or that State of universal Love and Unity amongst themselves which the Gospel recommends, and which if once generally established, could not fail to engage the Attention, and win the Approbation of every civilized Nation upon Earth.

BUT such is the Perverseness of Mankind, that the noblest Purposes are often perverted and made productive of the worst Effects. Even in this our native Country, where a general religious Liberty is indulged, and the holy Scriptures freely laid open to the Perusal and Study of all Men (from whence it might reasonably have been expected, that Christians of every Persuasion would grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST, and become united together in Love to all Assurance of Understanding, to the Acknowledgment of the Mystery of God, and of the Father, and of CHRIST, yet) the Case is unhappily otherwise; for this Liberty is frequently carried into Licentiousness, so that an almost general Neglect

Neglect of Religion hath taken Place, and produced in some Instances, an open Contempt of the sacred Truths of divine Revelation.

PUBLIC " Attempts have been made to
 " defeat the very End of Christianity, as
 " well by perverting its Doctrines as by
 " undermining its Evidence," and this
 even by some who profess themselves
 Teachers of the pure Religion of JESUS
 CHRIST.

" EVERY Thing peculiar to it as a new
 " Covenant, as a Scheme of Reconciling
 " offending Creatures, to an offended
 " Creator, is exploded, and Force is of-
 " fered to the express Letter of the Scrip-
 " tures, and to the common Sense of eve-
 " ry impartial Reader of them, to explain
 " away whatever is said upon, or implied
 " in the Doctrine of our Redemption.

" THE Foundation of it in the Fall of
 " Man, and the Corruption of his Nature;
 " is positively denied; the Necessity of it
 " is evaded by Attempts to prove, that
 " Repentance for what is past, and Amend-
 " ment for the future, is a sufficient Expi-
 " ation

" ation for Offences : The Notion of any
 " Satisfaction to be made to the Honour
 " and Justice of the divine Lawgiver, is
 " ridiculed ; and the Efficacy of that
 " which the Gospel declares was actually
 " made by the meretorious Attonement
 " offered by the eternal Son of God, is
 " invalidated by disowning his Divinity.
 " Thus our Saviour is deprived of every
 " Thing but an unmeaning Name ; and
 " his Disciples of every valuable Hope in
 " and through him ; and his Religion of
 " every Thing which distinguishes it from
 " a good System of Ethics.
 " To represent the Principles by which
 " these Notions, whether proceeding from
 " real or disguised Sentiments, are to be
 " refuted, would be to transcribe almost
 " every Page of the *New Testament*. An
 " impartial Deist would allow that the
 " Doctrine of Redemption by a divine
 " Saviour, is therein contained, for which
 " Reason he fairly rejects them toge-
 " ther ; but the Inconsistency certainly
 " is the greater in those who allow the
 " sacred Pages, and yet reject the Contents
 " of them.

" IN

“ IN these the lapsed State of human
 “ Nature, the Insufficiency of Repentance
 “ alone without Faith in CHRIST, the
 “ Reasonableness of a propitiatory Attone-
 “ ment, the actual Appointment of one by
 “ the eternal Father, the meretorious Com-
 “ pletion of it by the eternal Son, and the
 “ effectual Sanctification of our fallen Na-
 “ ture by the eternal Spirit, are clearly
 “ and distinctly taught.”

ALL Men, considered as the Offspring
 of *Adam*, are in a State of Enmity with
 GOD: ‘ They are by Nature the Children
 ‘ of Wrath,’ *Eph.* ii. 3. ‘ By the Offence
 ‘ of one Man Judgment came on All to
 ‘ Condemnation,’ *Rom.* v. 18. ‘ For until
 ‘ the Law Sin was in the World, and Death
 ‘ reigned from *Adam* to *Moses*, even over
 ‘ them, who had not sinned according to
 ‘ the Similitude of *Adam*’s Transgression,’
 (*viz.* against plain and positive Revelation)
Rom. v. 14, 15, &c. And even ‘ by the
 ‘ Deeds of the Law shall no Flesh be justi-
 ‘ fied,’ *Rom.* iii. 20. ‘ And we know that
 ‘ in us (that is in our Flesh) dwelleth no
 ‘ good Thing,’ *Rom.* vii. 18. ‘ But GOD
 ‘ chuseth

' chuseth us unto Salvation through the
 ' Sanctification of the Spirit and Belief of
 ' the Truth,' 1 *Thef.* ii. 13. ' So then we
 ' are sanctified by the Holy Ghost,' *Rom.*
xv. 16. ' Who helpeth our Infirmities,'
Rom. viii. 26. ' And worketh in us both
 ' to will and to do according to the good
 ' Pleasure of God,' *Phil.* ii. 14. ' And
 ' therefore it is not of Works but by Grace
 ' that we are saved through Faith, and that
 ' not of ourselves, for it is the Gift of
 ' God,' *Eph.* ii. 8, 9.

" He who knew our Nature much better
 " than we ourselves do, and who only
 " could know his own, who alone could
 " understand the real Demerit of actual
 " Transgression against his divine Majesty,
 " and the Terms on which they might be
 " rendered pardonable, consistently with
 " his divine Wisdom and Justice, and the
 " Vengeance due to them if unattoned and
 " unreformed, hath graciously condescend-
 " ed to make known to us these Particu-
 " lars, and to tell us what God hath done
 " for us, and what he still requires us to
 " do for ourselves. And by declaring his
 Will

“ Will to us as to the Method of accept-
 “ ing returning Sinners, hath manifested
 “ a marvellous and gracious Display of the
 “ divine Attributes, an harmonious Re-
 “ conciliation of the Holiness, Wisdom,
 “ Justice and Mercy of GOD, by setting
 “ forth his Son as the Propitiation through
 “ Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righ-
 “ teousness for the Remission of Sins that
 “ are past, through the Forbearance of
 “ GOD,” *Rom. iii. 25.*

‘ What the Law could not do in that it
 ‘ was weak through the Flesh, GOD, send-
 ‘ ing his Son, made in the Likeness of hu-
 ‘ man Flesh, for Sin condemned Sin in
 ‘ the Flesh,’ *Rom. viii. 3.* ‘ I deliver un-
 ‘ to you that which I also received, how
 ‘ that JESUS CHRIST died for our Sins,’
1 Cor. xv. 3. ‘ The Just for the Unjust,
 ‘ that he might bring us to GOD,’ *1 Pet.*
iii. 18. He who knew no Sin became
 Sin for us, that our Trespases not being
 imputed unto us, we might be made
 the Righteousness of GOD in him, *2 Cor.*
v. 19, 21. ‘ For altho’ we were dead
 ‘ in our Sins and the Uncircumcision of

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‘ our

' our Flesh, yet having our Trespases for-
 ' given, we are quickened through him,
 ' who hath blotted out the Hand-Writing
 ' of Ordinances that were against us, and
 ' took it out of the Way, nailing it to his
 ' Cross,' *Colos. ii. 14.* ' We are not re-
 ' deemed with corruptible Things, as Sil-
 ' ver and Gold, but with the precious
 ' Blood of CHRIST, as a Lamb without
 ' Blemish and without Spot,' *1 Pet. i. 18,*
19. And ' Herein GOD commendeth his
 ' Love to us, in that whilst we were yet
 ' Sinners, CHRIST died for us; and being
 ' now justified by his Blood, we shall be
 ' saved from Wrath through him; for if
 ' whilst we were Enemies we were recon-
 ' ciled to GOD by the Death of his Son,
 ' how much rather shall we be saved by
 ' the Life of JESUS CHRIST, by whom we
 ' have now received the Attonement,'
Rom. v. 8, &c. ' Such an High Priest be-
 ' came us, who is holy, harmless, unde-
 ' filed, separate from Sinners, and made
 ' higher than the Heavens; who needeth
 ' not daily as the High Priests under the
 ' Law, to offer up Sacrifice, first for his
 ' own

‘ own Sins, and then for the People’s,’ *Heb.* vii. 26, 27. Therefore ‘ We have an High Priest who is set on the Throne of the Majesty in the Heavens,’ *Heb.* viii. 1. Even CHRIST, ‘ Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without Spot to God,’ *Heb.* ix. 14. And ‘ After he had offered this one Sacrifice for Sins, he for ever sat down at the right Hand of God,’ *Heb.* x. 12.

WE find the Notion of Sacrifices prevailing amongst Mankind down from the Days of *Adam*, and have frequent Instances of God’s Approbation of that Species of Worship before the Establishment of the *Mosaic* Covenant ; and in that Dispensation the actual Appointment of it by GOD. But the *New Testament* informs us, that it was not possible for those Sacrifices to take away Sin, how often soever they were repeated.

IN what Light then can we consider them, but as Shadows and Prefigurations of the great propitiatory Sacrifice which was to be offered for the Sins of all Mankind, by the eternal Son of God, ‘ Who

' appeared once for all, that by the Sacri-
 ' fice of himself once offered, he might
 ' effectually put away Sin, and perfect for
 ' ever those that are sanctified,' *Heb. x. 14.*
 And who ' By his own Blood hath obtained
 ' eternal Redemption for us,' *Heb. ix. 12.*
 ' That JESUS, who is the Mediator of the
 ' new Covenant,' *Heb. ix. 15.* Even the
 Son of the Living God, ' Who is the
 ' Brightness of his Father's Glory, and the
 ' express Image of his Person, when he
 ' had by himself purged our Sins, sat down
 ' on the right Hand of the Majesty on high,'
Heb. i. 3. ' Hath himself born our Sins
 ' in his own Body on the Cross,' *1 Pet. ii.*
24. ' And is entered into the Heavens
 ' now to appear in the Presence of God,'
Heb. ix. 24. ' Where he ever liveth to
 ' make Intercession for us,' *Heb. vii. 25.*
 ' And we know that the Son of GOD is
 ' come, and hath given us an Understand-
 ' ing that we might know him that is true,
 ' even his Son JESUS CHRIST. This is the
 ' true GOD and eternal Life,' *1 John, v.*
20. Let this Hope then be our Consola-
 tion, and let us fly ' for Refuge to lay
 ' hold

‘ hold of this Hope as an Anchor of the
 ‘ Soul both sure and stedfast, which enter-
 ‘ eth into that within the Veil, whither
 ‘ the Forerunner is for us entered, even
 ‘ JESUS, made a Priest for ever after the
 ‘ Order of *Melchisedec*,’ *Heb. vi. 18, 19, 20.*

WHEN we find this Doctrine so plainly
 expressed and universally taught in the
 sacred Pages, when we meditate on God’s
 gracious provision for Mankind, and con-
 sider in how wonderful a Manner the di-
 vine Providence hath from the Beginning
 engaged itself in the Procurement of our
 Happiness; when we see the whole hu-
 man Race (JESUS CHRIST excepted) thro’
 the Transgression of their first Parents,
 estranged from God, and prone to every
 Thing which tends to keep them so; when
 we perceive that all Men have sinned, and
 come short of the Glory of God, and the
 Inability of all and every Man to yield a
 perfect unfinning Obedience to his Laws,
 even after the most serious Resolutions of
 Amendment of Life, we cannot but be
 surprized that any one, who reads the
New Testament, can overlook the Necessity,
 Propriety,

Propriety and Reality of that propitiatory Sacrifice, which those Scriptures so plainly assure us, was offered by our Lord JESUS CHRIST: And if we take those Scriptures in the plain Sense of their Expression, we cannot but be convinced of it to our inexpressible Consolation: We cannot but be struck with Wonder and Astonishment, and affected with Sentiments of Gratitude and Piety at the amazing Scene of magnificent Love, carried on and compleated by the Son of GOD, who condescended to leave the Glory which he had with the eternal Father before the World was, and he clothed with human Flesh, and converse with sinful Men; to submit to all the Miseries and Indignities of Reproach, Contempt and cruel Treatment from an ungrateful World, and even undergo the Agonies of an ignominious and painful Death, to redeem us from a State of Sin and Misery, to procure our Reconciliation with GOD, and purchase for us an Inheritance in his eternal Kingdom of Bliss and Glory: That he 'Who is 'the Image of the Invisible GOD, and the
' first

' first begotten of the whole Creation, by
 ' whom, and for whom, all Things both in
 ' Heaven and Earth were created, who
 ' is before all Things, and by whom all
 ' Things consist, who is the Head of the
 ' Body of the Church, and the first born
 ' from the Dead,' *Col. i. 15, 16, &c.* ' And
 ' in whom all the Plentitude of the God-
 ' head dwelleth bodily,' *Col. ii. 9.* Should
 offer himself a Sacrifice for Sin, *Eph. v.*
 1. ' And to redeem us from the Curse of
 ' the Law, he himself was made a Curse
 ' for us,' *Gal. iii. 13.* ' And became the
 ' Propitiation for our Sins,' *1 John ii. 2.*
 ' And that having Redemption through his
 ' Blood, even the Forgiveness of our Sins,'
Colof. i. 14. ' And being justified through
 ' Faith, we have Peace with God through
 ' JESUS CHRIST,' *Rom. v. i.* ' That altho'
 ' no Flesh could be justified in the Sight
 ' of God by the Deeds of the Law; yet
 ' the Righteousness of God, witnessed by
 ' the Law and the Prophets, is now mani-
 ' fested, even the Righteousness of God,
 ' which is by Faith in JESUS CHRIST, unto
 ' all, and upon all that believe, being
 ' justified

‘ justified freely by his Grace, through the
 ‘ Redemption that is in CHRIST JESUS,
 ‘ whom GOD hath set forth to be the Pro-
 ‘ pitiation through Faith in his Blood, to
 ‘ declare his righteousness for the Remis-
 ‘ sion of Sins that are past, through the
 ‘ Forbearance of GOD, that as all have sin-
 ‘ ned and come short of the Glory of GOD,
 ‘ he might be just, and the Justifier of him
 ‘ that believeth in JESUS,’ *Rom. iii. 20, &c.*

WE see ‘ The Scripture hath included
 ‘ all under Sin, that the Promise of Faith
 ‘ by JESUS CHRIST, might be given to them
 ‘ that believe,’ *Gal. iii. 22.* ‘ For God so
 ‘ loved the World, that he gave his only
 ‘ begotten Son, that whosoever believeth
 ‘ on him should not perish, but have ever-
 ‘ lasting Life,’ *John iii. 16.* ‘ Herein is
 ‘ Love indeed, not that we loved God,
 ‘ but that he loved us and sent his Son to
 ‘ be the Propitiation for our Sins,’ 1 *John*
 ‘ iv. 10. ‘ And to be the Saviour of the
 ‘ World,’ Verse 14. ‘ There is therefore
 ‘ no Condemnation for them that are in
 ‘ CHRIST JESUS, who walk not after the
 ‘ Flesh, but after the Spirit,’ *Rom. viii. 1.*

‘ Now

' Now if the Spirit of him that raised up
 ' JESUS from the Dead dwell in us, he that
 ' raised up JESUS from the Dead will also
 ' quicken our mortal Bodies by his Spirit,
 ' that dwelleth in us,' *Rom. viii. 11.* ' For
 ' we have received the Spirit of Adoption,
 ' whereby we cry *Abba*, Father; and his
 ' Spirit beareth Witness with our Spirit
 ' that we are the Children of GOD; and if
 ' Children then Heirs of GOD, even joint
 ' Heirs with CHRIST,' *Rom. viii. 15, 16, 17.*

' BUT let us not deceive ourselves in sup-
 posing that Faith in his Merits will screen
 us from the Wrath to come, whilst our
 Sins remain unrepented of, and our Lives
 unreformed; for though we are justified
 by Faith, *Gal. ii. 16*; yet Faith without
 Works is dead, *James ii. 17.* And there-
 fore he that cometh unto GOD, must (not
 only) believe that he is, but that he is the
 Rewarder of all them that diligently seek
 him, *Heb. xi. 6.*

FAITH is indeed the Foundation of all
 Christian Virtue; but this Faith must be
 of such active Efficacy as to produce in us
 not only a hearty and sincere Repentance

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for

for all past Offences, and a firm Resolution to avoid them for the Future, but a steady and persevering Endeavour to obey all the Commands of GOD, even to the End of our Lives : For except we repent we shall all perish, *Luke* xiii. 5. Every one that nameth the Name of the Lord, is required to depart from Iniquity, *2 Tim.* ii. 19; and to have no Fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darkness, *Eph.* v. 11.

THE Apostles preached Repentance towards GOD, as well as Faith in our LORD JESUS CHRIST, *Acts* xx. 21. They inform us that GOD now commands all Men every where to repent, because he hath appointed a Day in which he will judge the World in Righteousness by JESUS CHRIST, *Acts* xvii. 30, 31; and therefore they warn all Men to repent, that their Sins may be blotted out, *Acts* iii. 19.

OUR LORD declared it was not every one who should say unto him LORD! LORD! should enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the Will of his Father, which is in Heaven, *Matt.* vii. 21. For GOD will render unto every Man according

according to his Deeds: To them that by patient Continuance in well-doing seek for Glory, Honour and Immortality, eternal Life; but unto them that do not the Truth, but obey Unrighteousness, Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish to every one that doth Evil. *Rom.* ii. 6, 7; so that without Holiness no Man shall see the LORD, *Heb.* xii. 14. Therefore if we say that we have Fellowship with CHRIST whilst we walk in Darkness, we lie, and do not the Truth: But if we walk in the Light as he is Light, then have we Fellowship one with another, and the Blood of CHRIST cleanseth us from all Sin, 1 *John* i. 6, 7.

HENCE it is plain that neither Faith without Repentance nor Repentance without Faith, will procure our Acceptance with God. We must therefore 'Give all
'Diligence to add to our Faith Virtue,
'and to Virtue Knowledge, and to Know-
'ledge Temperance, and to Temperance
'Patience, and to Patience Godliness,
'and to Godliness brotherly Kindness,
'and to brotherly Kindness Charity,' 2 *Pet.* i. 5, 6, 7.

WE must be renewed in the Spirit of our Minds, and put on the new Man, which after God is created in Righteousness and true Holiness, *Eph. iv. 23, 24.* For there can be no true Repentance without actual Amendment of Life.

WE must not continue in the wilful Disobedience to any one Command of GOD; for whosoever thus offendeth is considered as guilty of all, *James ii. 10,* as being a wilful Transgressor of the Law of GOD. Nay, in some Cases, our Repentance will not be effectual, altho' we are not only sorry for our past Transgressions, but even studiously endeavour to avoid the like for the future: For where our Offences have been of such a Nature as that others are injured by them, the Gospel requires that we make Restitution for the Wrongs we have done: And where others have offended us, it also requires that we freely forgive them, and render Good for Evil, and that we be in Love and Charity with all Mankind, even our greatest Enemies and Persecutors.

WE must ' Lay aside all Bitterness, and
 ' Wrath, and Clamour, and evil speaking,
 ' with all Malice; and be kind one to
 ' another, tender-hearted, forgiving one
 ' another, as GOD for CHRIST'S Sake hath
 ' forgiven us,' *Eph. iv. 31, 32.* And what-
 ever (in Reason and good Conscience) we
 would have others do unto us, even so
 must we do unto them, *Mat. vii. 12.* All
 this is comprehended in the Duty of Chris-
 tian Repentance with Respect to Others.

IN REGARD to ourselves, true Repent-
 ance consists in lamenting and forsaking
 our Vices and Irregularities of Life, in la-
 bouring continually to know our own
 Hearts, and to subdue therein every in-
 ordinate Desire and Inclination; to purify
 ourselves from all filthiness both of Flesh
 and Spirit, *2 Cor. vii. 1*; and to possess
 our Vessel in Sanctification and Honour,
1 Thes. iv. 4.

AND with Respect to GOD, our Repent-
 ance will be incomplete how much soever
 we may be afflicted for our past Impiety,
 and how often soever we may confess our
 Sins to him, unless we have Faith in
 CHRIST,

CHRIST, and stedfastly resolve to obey all the Precepts of the Gospel. We ought to labour to acquire a due Sense of God's glorious Perfections, and the Obligations we lye under to love and to fear, to obey and trust in him, as the Author and Giver of all the Good we have or hope for; to comply with the Ordinances of Baptism and the LORD'S Supper, as being expressly enjoined by our LORD himself to all Christians; to pray to GOD for all we stand in Need of, and to give him Thanks for all the Blessings, we receive, not indeed because it can inform him more of our Wants or our Gratitude, than he would know without such Address; but because he hath commanded us so to do, and made our Prayers the Terms of his granting us what is best and most fitting for us. It is therefore the Duty of every Christian not only to be constant and diligent in private Prayer; but also in attending the public Worship, and joining with his Christian Brethren in their common Requests and Acts of Devotion.

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HERE indeed our pious Resolutions may be somewhat staggered, by the Consideration of the various Sects and Societies into which the Church of CHRIST is divided, and the different Modes of Worship they have severally adopted. We may for a Time be at a Loss to determine in which of them all we may serve GOD most acceptably.

BUT as it is our Duty to join with some Christian Society in the public Acts of Religion, it may not be improper for us in the first Place to examine and consider the Doctrines and Usages of that Church which hath been established by the legislative Authority of our Country, as the public national Religion.

IF we find these, in all essential and necessary Parts of Christian Duty, agreeable to the Doctrines of the Gospel, we have then no Need to concern ourselves with the Notions and Practices of other Societies, for the Purpose of settling our own Choice: But if upon due Enquiry, we do not find the former agreeable to what we think GOD requires of us, we ought
to

to remember, that it is our Duty to act with the Approbation of our own Consciences, and therefore to seek further, and follow that which we think most agreeable to the Word of God, which ought to be the Rule of our Religion.

THE Intent of every religious Establishment is, or should be, to preserve in the Minds of Men, the sacred Truths of divine Revelation, and their great Importance to Mankind, the Belief and Knowledge of God, and a due Sense, as well of what he hath done and will do for us, as of what he requires us to do for ourselves, of our Dependance on him, and the Necessity of our Resignation to his Will---placing our whole Trust in him, and obeying all his Laws; to purify our Hearts and spiritualize our Affections, to exercise our Devotion, and to direct us in such a Course of Piety towards God, social Virtue, and personal Regularity, as may secure us the Continuance of divine Favour, and entitle us to the glorious Rewards promised to Virtue and Holiness, by the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST.

WITH

WITH these Views Places of public Assembly for divine Worship have from Time to Time been erected, and stated Times for the Celebration of it settled amongst Christians, and Rituals and Liturgies for the public Service are said to have been used on such Occasions from the earliest Ages of Christianity, varying indeed in their Forms and Ceremonies, according to the different Societies where they were respectively used, or as the Times and Circumstances of Things made it suitable or expedient.

THE Exercise of public Worship being both enjoined by the Gospel and practised by the Apostles, all Christians ought to imitate their Example and follow their Directions. From what we find in the *New Testament* their Manner of exercising it appears to have been as plain and simple as possible. However, some Rules we find they had, and those were such as tended to Edification, Order and Decency.

SOME Ceremonies there must needs be in the public Acts of Religion; Men must have some external Form and Order

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wherein

wherein to join and regulate themselves in the Exercise of social Worship, otherwise it would be unavoidably attended with Confusion.

BUT as the Apostles have not given us a minute Account of their Manner of conducting it in all Particulars, nor confined Christian Congregations by express Directions as to particular external Usages, we may reasonably conclude, the Appointment of Forms and Ceremonies, so far as they are in themselves innocent, and conducive to the Ends and Purposes they recommend, are left to the Discretion of those who from Time to Time should officiate and preside in the Church.

A total disregard of all external Order and Ceremony, has a manifest Tendency to Irreligion and Atheism; and on the other Hand, to lay too much Stress upon them, as manifestly leads to Superstition and Hypocrisy.

FORMS and Ceremonies are not to be consider'd as Religion itself, but as the Means of exercising it with Decency and Propriety. So far as any Ritual or Form
of

of divine Worship is found conformable to those Directions in the *New Testament* concerning the Exercise of public Devotion, it cannot justly be charged with Error or Impropriety.

AND altho' in such other Particulars as are in themselves indifferent, as being neither expressly enjoined nor prohibited by those Scriptures, but found to be conducive to Decency and Regularity, different Usages may take Place in different Assemblies, according to different Minds or other Circumstances, and Objections may be made by particular Men to certain Parts of any established Mode of Religion; yet no Man ought to condemn the Whole because of such indifferent Parts of it, altho' in his own private Judgment he may prefer a different Method.

So long as the Works and Compositions of Men are liable to Imperfection, we may expect to find some Marks of that general Fallibility, some Defects and Inaccuracies in those Parts of our religious Establishments, concerning which the Scripture does not give particular and

plain Direction ; and yet, to conclude for this Reason, that no Form or Ceremony, however innocent in itself, should be prescribed by ecclesiastical Authority, for the Sake of Order and Decency, which is not expressly prescribed by the Scripture itself, or to refuse Compliance with Ceremonies confessedly not sinful, merely because they are enjoined by human Authority, would in Effect be utterly to reject that Part of the New Testament, which plainly supposes some undetermined Particulars of an indifferent Nature, left to the Prudence and Discretion of religious Pastors, by speaking of Things wanting in the Churches, and directing them to be set in Order by such as were appointed Rulers therein, *Tit.* 1. 5. And not only so, but enjoining Christian Societies to know those that labour amongst them, and are over them in the LORD, and to esteem them very highly for their Work's Sake, *1 Thes.* v. 12. And to obey those that had the Rule over them. *Heb.* xiii. 17.

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THO' social Worship without some settled Rules would be attended with unavoidable Inconvenience and Disorder, yet, so long as the Minds of Men are free, there cannot but be a Variety of Judgments and Opinions concerning the Propriety and Expediency of Things concerning which the Scriptures are not explicit and particular. This being the Case, we cannot expect in a Country like this, (where not only different Professions are tolerated, but the utmost Freedom of speaking and writing about religious Matters is permitted) to have any ecclesiastical Establishment that will not in divers Particulars be publicly found Fault with by some or other.

By what Means then can Order, Regularity and Decency in the public Worship be maintained, unless according to the above-mentioned Rule, we conform to the written Word in all Parts of essential Duty, and to the Prudence of religious Pastors in Matters merely ceremonial?

No Duty is more frequently recommended or more strongly inculcated in
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the New Testament than that of Prayer to
 GOD. 'Pray without ceasing,' 1 *Thef.* v. 17.
 'In every Thing by Prayer and Suppli-
 cation let your Requests be made known
 unto GOD,' *Phil.* iv. 6. 'I exhort there-
 fore, that first of all by Supplications,
 Prayers, Intercessions, and Giving of
 Thanks be made for all Men; for Kings
 and all that are in Authority, that ye
 may lead a quiet and peaceable Life, in
 all Godliness and Honesty; for this is
 good and acceptable in the Sight of GOD
 our Saviour,' 1 *Tim.* ii 1, 2, 3.

Now, notwithstanding the Apostle re-
 quires us to make Prayers and Supplica-
 tions, Intercessions and Thanksgivings to
 GOD, he hath not supplied us with any
 particular Forms of Words to use in these
 several Acts of Devotion, and yet it is
 certain if we are to pray we must by some
 Means be furnished with Words to express
 our Ideas and Desires.

With Respect to public Prayer in par-
 ticular, he frequently reminds us of the
 Necessity of Unanimity and Uniformity
 therein, 'Now the GOD of Patience and
 Conso-

‘ Consolation grant you to be like-minded
 ‘ towards one another according to CHRIST
 ‘ JESUS, that ye may with one Mind and
 ‘ one Mouth glorify God, even the Father
 ‘ of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, *Rom. xv.*
 5, 6.

THE same Apostle in his first Epistle
 to the *Corinthians*, C. i. expresses his
 Thankfulness to God for the Grace that
 was given them by JESUS CHRIST, that in
 every Thing they were enriched by him
 in all Knowledge and all Utterance, and
 addresses them as follows, ‘ Now I beseech
 ‘ you Brethren by our LORD JESUS CHRIST,
 ‘ that you all speak the same Thing, and
 ‘ that there be no Divisions amongst you,
 ‘ but that ye be perfectly joined together
 ‘ in the same Mind,’ *Ec. V. 10.*

IN the xi. Chapter he commends them
 for keeping the Ordinances he had de-
 livered unto them, and altho’ by what
 follows those Ordinances seem to have re-
 lated to the Manner of exercising the
 public Worship, yet what those Ordi-
 nances were in particular, he doth not
 inform us. He then proceeds to give
 them

them further Directions touching the same Matter, and points out to them some particular Ceremonies in their public Worship, wherein they had not conducted themselves with Decency and Propriety; and adds, ' If any Man seem to be contentious, we have no such Custom, neither the Churches of God. Now in this that I declare unto you, I praise you not, that you come together, not for the Better, but for the Worse. For first of all, when you come together in the Church, I hear that there be Divisions among you,' V. 16, 17, 18.

He then particularly reproves them for their Indecency and Irreverence in celebrating the Lord's Supper, and representing to them in the following Chapters, under the Notion of their being all Members of the same Body (the Church) the Necessity of Charity and Unanimity among themselves, he reminds them that their public religious Service should be so conducted as that all might be edified thereby, and that their Prayers in their Assemblies should be so expressed as that

Others

Others present might both understand them and join in them.

IN the xiv. Chapter he particularly disapproves of their coming together with different Plans of Doctrine and Devotion.

‘How is it then, Brethren, when ye come together every one of you hath a Psalm, hath a Doctrine, hath a Tongue, hath a Revelation, hath an Interpretation? Let all Things be done to edifying,’ V. 26. To this End he recommends to them Persecuity and plain Speech easy to be understood, V. 9. and cautions them to avoid Confusion in the Churches of the Saints, V. 33. for which Purpose he thus admonishes them, ‘Let all Things be done decently and in Order,’ V. 40.

FROM these Direction of *St. Paul*, we cannot but conclude that Uniformity and Unanimity, as far as it can subsist, is necessary in the Performance of public Worship, and that it should be conducted with Decency and Order, and expressed in such a Way as that all who join in it may be edified thereby.

THE Apostles themselves who had the immediate Assistance of the HOLY GHOST, so as to be inspired in the very Moment of Prayer what to express, had indeed no Need of precomposed Prayers; but Christian Ministers cannot now in Reality have any Pretensions to that perfect Degree of Inspiration; Their Supplications and Prayers, Intercessions and Thanksgivings must therefore stand in Need of some previous Study and Preparation. And as the Scriptures of the New Testament do not furnish us with any particular Forms to use on the various Occasions of Prayer, which they nevertheless require us to offer up to GOD, according to our several particular Exigences, doubtless the Manner of expressing them is left to the Regulation of human Piety and Discretion, and should be rendered as suitable as possible to the Assembly which are to join in them.

OUR Modes and Forms of public Worship must therefore either be settled by a joint Consultation of Christians, and established by some proportionable Sanction, or be submitted to the Direction or Caprice

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of the officiating Minister of each particular Society or Congregation, whatever his Notions or his Capacity may be, or else the Individuals of Christian Assemblies must be left to differ and interfere with each other in the Exercise of their common Devotions : And which of these several Methods can we suppose to be most agreeable to the Apostles' Directions ?

As to the Arguments used by some Christians in Favour of extempore Prayer in the public Assemblies of Christians, how unsatisfactory are they when properly considered ?

THE mental Faculties of Men are far from being so securely perfect as to stand in no Need of external Aid and Assistance : We are surrounded with worldly Objects, and necessarily conversant with earthly Affairs, and many Circumstances may accidentally intrude so as to discompose the Mind, and baffle the Attention even in the Act of Devotion, and sometimes disqualify the best of Men for expressing their extempore Prayers with due Propriety and Accuracy : And how absurd are

the Arguments which recommend this Way of expressing the public Devotion, under the Notion of *free Prayer*? To whom are they *free*? Truly to none but the Pronouncer of them: The Congregation are far from partaking of this *Freedom*, being all the while confined as well to his Ideas as his Expressions, without any previous Knowledge of what he is going to utter, and without any Directory to conduct them in their Accompaniment of him.

WHAT Advantage then can Christian Assemblies reap from this Manner of expressing social Prayer, which they may not have in the Use of written Forms, whether of the Minister's own composing, or prepared by Others for his Use, so as such Forms (whatever they be) do fully and pathetically express the Objects aimed at by such Prayer?

THE Person who utters extempore Prayer may indeed be free, may be affected with his own Conceptions, and feel a Complacency and secret Satisfaction in the Use of his own Oratory; but the Congregation
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are far from partaking of this *self-satisfying Freedom*; their Devotions being all the while controled by his Fancy, and confined to his accidental free Expressions.

THE difference between this way of exercising social Worship, and that of joining in a judicious and well-composed Liturgy, is therefore very obvious; for altho' a well-expressed extempore Prayer may affect the Minds of the Audience, and excite pious Affections, yet this is not all that is necessary in those who are assembled for the Performance of joint and public Worship: For in this the Congregation are not only to be acted upon, but to act themselves: They are to bear a Part and join with one Heart and one Voice, in the offering up their common Addresses, *Rom. xv. 5, 6.*

IN private Devotion we have only God and our own Consciences to consult; and here the Exercise of extempore Prayer, (if we are not at a Loss for apt Expressions) may have its full and proper Effect: But in social Worship, a Regard is to be had to the Convenience and Edification of Others,

Others, as well as our own, and our Prayers should be adapted accordingly, suited to our common Needs and common Mercies: And all who partake in them ought to have such Knowledge of them before Hand, as may prepare and enable them to join properly in the common Devotion.

To this End we may, without Doubt, both innocently and profitably make Use of such written Liturgies and Forms of Prayer, as are properly expressive of the fit Objects of public and common Devotion: For in this Way of performing public Worship, we have the Service before us, and know before Hand what we are going to pray for, and are thereby prepared for accompanying the Minister and making every Act of Devotion our own: And as to the Propriety and Efficacy of prescribed Forms, doubtless our Prayers, when prepared with Study and Deliberation, and committed to Writing, may be as pathetically expressed, and as affectingly delivered by a devout and judicious Minister, as those which depend on unpremeditated Ejaculation, or accidental Memory;

Memory ; and it is reasonable to suppose, they may be at least as properly compiled by the united Assistance of pious and learned Christians, as by one single Man ; and who is more fit to prepare them than the Pastors of the Church, whose Time and Talents are devoted to the Concerns of Religion ?

THE Christian Church from its original Foundation, hath always had certain Officers to prelide in, and conduct it. ‘ He
‘ that descended, is the same also that
‘ ascended far above all Heavens, that he
‘ might fill all Things ; and he gave some
‘ Apostles, some Prophets, some Evange-
‘ lists, some Pastors and Teachers, for the
‘ perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of
‘ the Ministry, for edifying the Body of
‘ CHRIST, until we all come to the Unity
‘ of the Faith, and the Knowledge of the
‘ Son of GOD, unto a perfect Man, unto
‘ the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness
‘ of CHRIST,’ *Eph. iv. 10, 11, 12, 13.*

THE Apostles, who had their Commission from our LORD himself, did constitute and appoint certain Orders of Men in the
Churches

Churches they established, such as Bishops, Priests, or Elders and Deacons, *Acts* xiv. 23. and *Acts* vi. 3, &c. And those, who were by the Apostles ordained to this Authority, were required to confer the same on Others, *Tit*, i. 5. and 2 *Tim*. ii. 2.

ST. PAUL particularly directs his Epistle to the *Philipians*, to the Bishops and Deacons of that Church, by which it is evident that such Orders were there established in the Days of the Apostles; as to the Elders, the same Apostle in his Epistle to *Timothy*, distinguishes them by the Name of Presbyters, 1 *Tim*. iv. 14.

THE Qualifications of a Bishop he describes as follows; 'This is a true Saying, that he who desireth the Office of a Bishop, desireth a good Work. A Bishop then must be blameless, the Husband of one Wife, vigilant, sober, of good Behaviour, given to Hospitality, apt to teach, not given to Wine, no Striker, nor given to filthy Lucre, but patient, not a Brawler nor covetous: One that ruleth well his own House, and having his Children in Subjection with all

all Gravity. For if a Man know not how to rule his own House, how shall he take Care of the Church of GOD? &c. 1 *Tim.* iii. 1, 2, 3, 4, &c. Here we see the Care of the Churches reposed in those who were ordained to the Office of Bishops.

IN his Epistle to *Titus* he informs us, ' A Bishop should be blameless, as the Steward of God, not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to Wine, no Striker, not given to filthy Lucre, but a Lover of Hospitality, a Lover of good Men, sober, just, holy, temperate, holding fast the faithful Word,' &c. *Tit.* i. 7, 8, 9.

WITH Regard to the Deacons, he tells us, ' They must be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much Wine, not greedy of filthy Lucre, holding fast the Mystery of the Faith in a pure Conscience, and that these also should first be proved, and let them use the Office of a Deacon, being found blameless, 1 *Tim.* iii. 8, 9, 10.

IN his Charge to the Elders of the Church of *Ephesus*, he thus admonishes them: ' Take Heed therefore unto yourselves and to the Flock over which
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‘ the HOLY GHOST hath made you Over-
 ‘ seers to feed the Flock of GOD, which
 ‘ he hath purchased with his own Blood,’
Acts xx. 28.

ST. PETER in his first general Epistle exhorts the Elders to feed the Flock of GOD, and to take upon them the Superintendence thereof, *1 Pet.* v. 2.

THEIR Duty then, as may appear from the above cited Texts, and divers other Parts of the Apostolical Epistles, was as Stewards of the Misteries of GOD, as faithful Pastors and Ministers of the Church of CHRIST, (according to the Duties of their several Orders) to officiate and be employed in holy Things, to feed the Flock of GOD, and to take upon them the Oversight thereof, *1 Pet.* v. 2. To teach and preach the Word of GOD, *2 Tim.* iv. 2, &c. Even the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST, *2 Cor.* x. 16. To reprove, rebuke and exhort with all Long-suffering and Doctrine, *2 Tim.* iv. 2. And by sound Doctrine to convince the Gainsayers, *Tit.* i. 9. To take Care of the Church of CHRIST, *1 Tim.* iii. 5. And to rule therein, *1 Tim.* v. 17.

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Not indeed as Lords over God's Heritage,
but as Examples to his Flock, *1 Pet. v. 3.*
And to set in Order such Things as should
be wanting in the Churches, *Tit. i. 5.*

SUCH, and such like were the Instituti-
ons of the primitive Church with Respect
to it's Pastors. And as to the Duty of
Christian Societies towards them, *St. Paul*
hath thus informed us: ' Now we beseech
' you Brethren, to know them which la-
' bour among you, and are over you in
' the LORD, and esteem them very highly
' for their Work's Sake, and be at Peace
' among yourselves,' *1 Thes. v. 12, 13.*
' Let the Elders that rule well be account-
' ed worthy of double Honour, especially
' those that labour in the Word and in
' Doctrine,' *1 Tim. v. 17.* ' Remember
' those that have the Rule over you, whose
' Faith follow, considering the End of
' their Conversation,' *Heb. xiii. 7.* ' Obey
' those that have the Rule over you, and
' submit yourselves: For they watch for
' your Souls as those that must give an
Account,' *Heb. xiii. 17.*

WE learn from ecclesiastical History, that these or like Orders of Office in the Christian Church, were continued in the succeeding Ages from the Time of the Apostles. Even when Princes and Governors of States and Countries became Converts to Christianity, so as to authorize and establish the public Profession of it by the Laws of their respective Dominions, whatever Authority they assumed in other Matters, yet the primitive Establishment of Church Governors seems to have been preserved for many Centuries; and altho' different Institutions may have taken Place in different Societies, yet the Church of *England* seems in this Particular to be agreeable to the primitive Usage: and whilst her Pastors adhere to the holy Scriptures in all Parts of essential Duty, Doubtless they have as good a Claim to the Arguments of *St. Paul*, for the Right of regulating and conducting the public Worship in that Church or Society which coincides in their Principles, and approves of their Authority, as the Pastors of other Christian Societies have in the Congregations where they officiate. It

It cannot indeed be expected that they can please all Men; for if a Ritual had been framed by the Apostles themselves, there would have been some to find Fault with it.

THE Compilers of our Liturgy were Men, liable as well as Others, to Error and Imperfection, and therefore it would be absurd to expect it free from what is common to all human Ordinances, notwithstanding the boasted Infallibility of the Church of *Rome*.

It has now had the Trial of several Ages, and it is no Wonder that in all that Time it has met with many to cavil and object, some to one Part, and some to another of it. It is nevertheless our Duty to satisfy ourselves concerning its Propriety and Utility. And if upon a candid and fair Examination, we find it preferable to what is used in any other Society, we have the Satisfaction to believe, that in adopting it we make Choice of the best.

IN this Examination the chief Things to be considered are, Whether in all Particulars wherein the Gospel hath given express

press Direction, our Practice be agreeable thereto.

WHETHER our public Forms of Prayer are proper Exercises of Christian Devotion.

WHETHER the Service be conducted with a becoming Order and Decency.

AND how far the whole is adapted to answer the great Ends of Christian Worship. And here I beg Leave to offer a few Questions by Way of Introduction to this Enquiry.

Is there a Virtue taught and enjoined by the Gospel, that our Church Liturgy is not calculated to cherish and promote ?

Is there a Vice forbidden that it doth not deprecate and discountenance ?

Do not our Forms of Prayer, in a short, but patheticall Manner, express the severall Objects of our Devotion, and our humble Dependance on God for all the Needs and Necessities both of our Souls and Bodies ?

ARE not the Objects of our Prayers such as the Gospel warrants us to ask at the Hand of God ?

AND

AND is not every Petition made in the Name, and thro' the Mediation of JESUS CHRIST, according to the invariable Rule of the Apostles ?

DOES not the whole conspire to advance and establish a rational Piety towards God, to subdue every irregular and sinful Passion and Inclination in ourselves, to produce a meek, merciful, honest and benevolent Mind and Conduct towards Mankind ; to promote Harmony and Peace, Benignity and Charity, Sincerity and Truth, Order and Felicity in the World, and in general to fit and prepare Men for those heavenly Mansions of Purity and Holiness, Bliss and Glory, which by the Gospel we are taught to expect and to endeavour to obtain, and where no unjust, unholy, impure or wicked Person can reasonably hope to find Admittance ?

IF our Church be thus circumstanced, if in all those Particulars wherein the Scriptures have given plain Direction, it be agreeable to what was taught and practised by the holy Apostles, if our Teachers hold the Scriptures to be the only infallible

ble Rule both of our Faith and Morals, if their Doctrines from the Pulpit are in general agreeable thereto, if our Forms of Worship are properly expressive of those Objects which are fit and necessary to exercise the Devotion of Christian Congregations, and such as tend to the Advancement of true Piety and Virtue amongst Men, it is doubtless a good Church in its essential Foundation, however it may be capable of Improvement in Point of Ceremony, which is no more than the Shadow of Religion.

HAVE we not all the free Use of the sacred Volumes? And is not the serious Perusal and diligent Study of them constantly recommended to us in the Discourses of our Ministers?

IF it be so, and we will suffer all these Means to have their due Influence on our Lives and Actions, we have no Reason to doubt but that whilst we continue to serve God with Diligence and Sincerity of Heart in such a Church, and such a Religion as this, our pious Services will be accepted by him; and all those Errors
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and Imperfections which Others may impute to us (whilst we ourselves upon the most diligent Enquiry cannot think them so) will be graciously overlooked and pardoned, for the Sake of that JESUS who loved his Church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of Water by the Word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle or any such Thing, but that it might be holy and without Blemish, *Eph. v. 25, 26, 27.* Now we know in Part, and prophesy in Part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in Part shall be done away, *1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10.*

LET us still remember that the Mode of Religion is not Religion itself, and whilst we continue to exercise it according to the best of our Knowledge and Capacity, and are ready to reform whatever we may perceive to be amiss in our religious Practice, we need not doubt of our Fellowship in the Gospel, but be confident that he who hath begun a good Work

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in us, will perform it until the Day of CHRIST JESUS, *Phil.* i. 6.

I do not mean to represent the Church of *England* as entitled to any greater Degree of the divine Favour and Regard, than other Christian Churches. GOD is no Respector of Persons. It is not the bare Profession of belonging to this or that particular Church or Society of Christians, that will procure us the Favour of the ALMIGHTY; for in every Church he that cometh before GOD with the Incense of an innocent and virtuous Life, and offers up his Addresses of Prayer and Praise, from an honest Heart and pure Conscience, will doubtless find Acceptance.

“ No Promise was ever made to any
 “ one particular Society or Denomination
 “ of Christians more than another, and
 “ the Impossibility of erring was never
 “ promised to any. The Gates of Hell
 “ have never prevailed against the *Chris-*
 “ *tian Church*, because *Christianity* hath
 “ prevailed ever since it was established,
 “ and we doubt not, will prevail even
 “ to the End of the World : There hath
 always

“ always been a Society of Men professing
 “ the Name of JESUS, and receiving his
 “ Laws as the Rule of their Faith and
 “ Practice, altho’ it hath not been in every
 “ Part of it, or perhaps in any, entirely
 “ free from some Mixture of Error and
 “ Imperfections.”

It is undoubtedly the Duty of all Christians, and especially the Clergy of every Profession, to aim at all possible Improvement and Perfection in their religious Establishments; every real Defect should be amended, and every Impropriety removed: But Care and Consideration should be used in the Abolishing what hath been properly established and generally approved: It should by no Means give Place to, or be exchanged for, any other Institution, but what is manifestly and undeniably more eligible and beneficial.

DIFFERENT Societies may adopt different Modes of Religion, and yet all may be right as to Religion itself. Our Religion as Christians both in Opinion and Practice depends on our own Convictions,

directed by the Laws of CHRIST, and therefore our Consciences ought to be free. Every one ought to be fully persuaded in his Mind, *Rom. xiv. 5.*

A Society which approves of that Mode of Religion which is established under Sanction of the civil Government, may as lawfully and innocently comply with religious Teachers appointed by their Authority, as Societies of different Persuasions may with Teachers authorized and appointed in their Way, so long as the Scriptures are made the Rule of their Religion.

THE Christian Religion cannot be the worse for being embraced by civil Legislators, whilst they themselves are governed by the Laws of CHRIST. All that profess CHRIST'S Religion are Subjects of his spiritual Kingdom, whether they be Governors or Subjects of an earthly State, and are to be governed by his Laws in Matters of Faith and eternal Salvation.

No earthly Prince, Potentate or Governor, hath any Authority to compel his Fellow-Subjects of CHRIST'S Kingdom,

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to receive any Thing as his Religion which is not exprefsly declared to be fo by the Gospel, or to force their Compliance with any human Institution in Religion, whereof their Consciences cannot approve. Religion when practised under such a Restraint, is not the Religion which GOD requires, which is that of the Heart and Conscience.

BUT tho' the true and sincere Profession of CHRIST'S Religion is of such a Nature as not to be compelled by human Laws, yet GOD may permit the prudent Laws and Ordinances of Christian States and Communities to be a Means of advancing the Honour of the Christian Profession.

BEFORE the Rulers of the Kingdoms of this World embraced Christianity, it subsisted and flourished not only without of human Laws to favour it, but even when the Laws of every State and Kingdom upon Earth were against it; and we know GOD is still able to support it without the Aid of human Laws: But certainly Christian Governors ought to pursue different Laws of Government
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than what were pursued by Heathens and Infidels.

IN those primitive Days, GOD was pleased to actuate his faithful Servants, the first Preachers of the Gospel, with supernatural Powers to convert a prejudiced and carnal World : But when these had so far prevailed as to fix the divine Truths of the Gospel in the Hearts of Multitudes of good Men, in divers Parts of of the World, and laid a Foundation for the Conversion of Princes and Governors of Countries and Nations, to the Faith and Religion of JESUS CHRIST, so as to authorize and establish the public Exercise of it by the Laws of their respective Dominions, GOD in his good Time ceased to deal with Mankind in that marvellous Way.

THE Doctrines of our LORD and his Apostles were now preserved in Record, and Men, having these for their Guide, seem to have been left to conduct themselves in the ordinary Course of human Nature, the Reason and Understanding of the human Mind, the sacred Writings of
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divine Revelation, and the Laws and Ordinances of *Christian* States and Communities, supplying the Place of his former extraordinary Communications, and co-operating with the divine Grace in procuring Obedience to the Laws of God.

THUS the Laws and Ordinances of *Christian* States and Nations became subservient to the Laws of *Christianity*, and *Christian* Governors became, under God, the Guardians and Protectors both of the civil and religious Rights of *Christian* Communities. For, if human Laws and Sanctions are necessary to the Peace and well-being of *Christian* Communities, the Power of enacting such Laws must be vested in some Person or Persons for the Good of that Nation or Society, for which such Laws are to be established, and whoever are entrusted with this Authority, have a sacred Trust reposed in them, which they ought conscientiously to discharge for the Good of that Society or Community, which professeth to live under such Laws. By what Means soever this Power is conferred, and in whomsoever it is lodged, still
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it comes from GOD, and must be accounted for to him ; and therefore ought to be exercised in such a Way as may best answer the Ends for which all civil Powers were created, *viz.* the Honour of GOD, and the Peace and Well-being of Society.

THE many Directions given us by the holy Apostles concerning our Obedience and Submission to civil Magistrates, plainly supposes their Authority to be of such a Nature. ‘ Put them in Mind to be subject to principalities and Powers, and to obey Magistrates,’ *Tit.* iii. 1. ‘ Let every Soul be subject to the higher Powers, for there is no Power but of GOD ; the Powers that be, are ordained of GOD,’ *Rom.* xiii. 1. ‘ Submit yourselves to every Ordinance of Man, for the LORD’S Sake, whether to the King as Supream, or to Governors, as they that are sent by him for the Punishment of Evil-Doers, and for the Praise of them that do well,’ *1 Pet.* ii. 13, 14.

THE main Design therefore of the civil Power should be to turn the Attention of its Magistrates and Members strongly on
GOD’S

God's continual Inspection and future Judgment, to preserve his Laws from Violation, to secure the Peace of Mankind in general, and of that Community in particular which it is engaged to govern and protect, and to espouse the Interests of true Religion.

THERE cannot be a stronger Inducement to Compliance with human Laws and Ordinances, than their coinciding with the Laws of Religion and Conscience. When Men believe their Religion comes from God, and find the Laws of the civil Magistrate consistent with, and subservient to the divine Law, they have the most rational and effectual Motives to Obedience and civil Order; and therefore to talk of framing a civil Government in a *Christian* State, and to exclude from it the Influence of CHRIST'S Religion, is absurd and unreasonable.

THE Legislators and Governors of every *Christian* State and Community, ought not only to have a due Sense of Religion themselves, but a particular Regard to the Preservation of it amongst the People

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over whom they preside. They ought certainly to exert their Authority in the Suppression of Vice, Immorality and Profaneness, and in the Encouragement of Virtue and true Morality, (which has its real Foundation in Piety, and a suitable Regard to the supream Being, and those Truths and Motives wherewith Revelation furnisheth us. Therefore Religion ought to be their first and greatest Concern.

WITHOUT public Worship, the Practice of public Virtue could not be properly supported amongst Men; it could not be encouraged and enforced by any Motives sufficient to ballance those powerful Temptations to Vice, with which every Age and every Nation so plentifully abound.

AND if we believe that the public as well as private Events of human Life are directed by Providence; if we allow that there are public and national, as well as private and personal Evils and Blessings, we must surely allow that public and national, as well as private and personal Gratitude and Devotion is due to God, and that public and national Worship is both reasonable and necessary. RE-

RELIGION ought therefore to be the first and greatest Concern of *Christian* Magistrates. They ought to hold forth the Religion taught by JESUS CHRIST and his Apostles, as the public Religion of the State, and to take Care that Places of Assembly for the public Worship be maintained, and to protect the peaceable Exercise of it amongst all Ranks and Degrees of the People, however they may be detached into separate Societies for the Exercise of it. And whilst they do not invade the Rights of Conscience, but permit all the Members of the State to serve GOD in the Way they think best, they doubtless may themselves prefer that particular Mode of Religion which they believe to be most agreeable to the Gospel, and distinguish it from the Rest by their own particular Choice and Approbation.

To deny them these Priviledges would be to defeat the very End of their Authority: For if the Wisdom of Providence hath so ordered the Affairs of human Life, as that Mankind cannot subsist happily without Society, and that Society shall

stand in Need of human Laws and Regulations for its Well-being and Support; if God hath not only permitted the Establishment of civil Governors, but hath commanded us to submit to their Authority; if he hath revealed to us Laws from Heaven, to which the Laws of human Ordinance are to be analogous and subservient, then, into what Hands soever the Power of enacting and enforcing such human Laws is committed, those who are vested with that Authority have a sacred Trust reposed in them, which they ought (as is before-mentioned) conscientiously to discharge for the Good of the Community, the Honour of God, and the Advancement of what the Scriptures declare to be true Religion. They are accountable to God and their own Consciences for the faithful Execution of this important Trust, and are under God, become the Guardians and Protectors of the religious and civil Rights of that Society or Body of People who are to be governed by their Laws.

To obtrude their own Mode of Religion on all the Members of the State without
Exception,

Exception, under compulsive and penal Laws, without having Regard whether it may, or may not be agreeable to the Consciences of Individuals, or even to prohibit any peaceable and orderly Subjects of the State from practising what they believe to be that Religion which God requires, would be a Violation of that Liberty wherewith CHRIST hath made us free, which is the unalienable Right of all the Subjects of his Kingdom.

BUT as Christian Governors have Consciences to follow as well as other Men, they ought to act with their Approbation both in their private Capacity as Christian Men, and in their public one as Christian Governors. In the latter Capacity, to have no Regard to the Preservation of that Practice of Religion whereof themselves and the Bulk of the People approve; but to extend the Wages of the Ministry committed to their Patronage, to every one who shall think proper to assume the Office of a religious Teacher, whatever his Principles or his Qualifications may be, or however injurious to true Religion
or

or the Peace of Society, his Doctrines may prove, would be a manifest Prostitution and Abuse of their sacred Trust as Governors of a Christian Community.

THEY cannot act uprightly in the Sight of God, if they make no Distinction between what in their own Consciences they believe to be right, and what they think otherwise.

THE Articles and Terms of Subscription required from those who are to be admitted to the pastoral Office in the Church of England, are at this Time the grand Subject of Controversy amongst us, chiefly indeed between her Clergy, and those of dissenting Professions.

MANY Reasons both for and against them, have lately been offered to the Public, and the Disputes on both Sides have, in many Instances, been conducted with great Force of Argument; but the Difficulty still lies in drawing the Lines of Accomodation between them. For, altho' it is the Duty of all Christians to have a sacred Regard to public Peace and Concord, and with this View both the
civil

civil Magistrates and the established Clergy, ought to pay all due Attention to the reasonable Solicitations of their Christian Brethren, for the Procurement of Uniformity of Practice, so as not to offer Violence to their own Consciences, and those who coincide in their Notions ; yet 'till this Disposition can take Place amongst the dissenting Societies, as well as in the Church of *England*, it is but vain to expect that any reasonable Compliances from the latter alone will effect that general Reconciliation, and establish that universal Harmony, which it concerns all to promote.

FOR if such Concessions were to be made to any one particular Sect of dissenting Christians, as they on their Part should require, still other Societies of different Notions and Opinions, would remain unsatisfied and un-united ; new Objections would still be made, and a Compliance with them as strenuously urged and required : and whilst every Sect continues obstinately attached to their own particular Mode and Practice of Religion,
it

it will not be possible for them to unite in one common Assembly for the Exercise of divine Worship, without Disorder and Confusion.

THE Pastors of the established Church ought indeed to make all reasonable Allowances for the Scruples of their dissenting Brethren, but it cannot be expected they should vary and change their ecclesiastical Constitution as often as the Views of any arrogant or designing Man or Set of Men, or the Caprice or Prejudices of fickle or mis-judging Christians may raise trifling or unreasonable Objections, and claim a Reformation suitable to their own particular Views or Notions. To do this would be to expose themselves and their Religion to the Contempt and Ridicule of every rational Man: And if all Subscriptions and every Test of Principles were to be abolished, and they were to admit without Distinction, Men of every different Persuasion as public Teachers in their Church or Society, there is great Reason to fear they would by that Means open a Way for the Propagation of Error and
Confusion

Confusion amongst their Followers. The Apostles and first Christians, we find, had certain Rules of Caution and Test whereby they admitted Men into their Fellowship and Ministry, *Acts* i. 21. and vi. 5. and ix. 13. 27.

AND can any one who entertains a due Sense of the Invaluableness of our holy Religion, set so lightly by it, as to say that all Caution and Probation in the Admission of its Ministers, should now be wholly laid aside, and no Regard at all be had to the Example or Direction of the Apostles in this Matter?

CHRIST has indeed promised to protect his Church even to the End of the World: But has he any where declared that he will always do it by Miracles, or that the Prudence of *Christians* shall be no Way concerned as the Means of his protecting it? When he sent forth his Disciples, he cautioned them to be wise as Serpents, though harmless as Doves: And is not the same human Prudence as necessary in the Pastors of his Church now, for the Preservation of what they taught, as it

was to them in the publishing it to the World?

IF it be, doubtless it concerns the Rulers of every *Christian* State and Community, to have some Regard into what Hands the Power of ordaining Ministers is committed, and those who exercise that Authority ought to be well satisfied that the Terms they prescribe are perfectly agreeable to, and warranted by the Gospel.

IF the Advancement of true Religion in any Degree depends on the Principles of its Ministers, certainly those who confer Ordination ought at least to have such Information of the Candidates as may enable them to entertain a good Opinion of their Qualifications, before they admit them to the Ministry: And as they cannot look into the Hearts of Men, so as to discover their secret Thoughts, it is but reasonable for them to expect some external Tokens of Aptitude, and obtain every Proof and Satisfaction in their Power in a Matter of such great Importance. To deny them in this Case every Means of human Probation, to say that no Information

mation or Test of Principles shall be used, no Examination made, nor any Declaration or Subscription required, not even an Assent to the holy Scriptures themselves (as it hath been urged in a late Pamphlet, in Defence of the Dissenting Clergy) would in Effect, be saying that even *Jews, Mahometans, Infidels and Atheists*, if they apply for Ordination, should be admitted as Teachers in the Church of CHRIST without Distinction: And the same Arguments which deny to religious Governors the Power of excluding any from the Ministry on Account of their religious Opinions and Principles, deny them also the Power of removing any from the Office, for preaching Doctrines in Support of such Opinions and Principles, however erroneous they may consider them to be, or however detrimental to the Peace of their Church or Society they may expect them to prove.

THE Inconvenience and Confusion that must attend a religious Society thus circumstanced, cannot but be obvious to every thinking Man, and yet amongst the

Arguments offered to the Public in Favour of the Petitioners, we find such an Establishment recommended in the most licentious Degree.

FOR, in speaking of the Authority of civil Governors of *Christian* States and Communities, it is asserted, that “To talk of their preferring *Christianity* to *Paganism*, and distinguishing it by public Marks of Favour, is a Piece of fallacious Reasoning-----That the *Pagan* Subject, who conforms to the Laws of civil Order, hath an equal Right to Protection with the *Christian* Subject, and that the same Principles which justify the civil Magistrate in making this Distinction, will also justify him in making it in those Sects into which Christianity is unhappily divided, and bestowing his Favours of Riches and Honours on his own Sect only, exclusive of all the Rest.”

SUCH a Doctrine as this might seem reasonable if applied to that ordinary Protection which is due from the civil Magistrate to all the orderly Subjects of the

the State, whatever their religious Persuasions may be ; but when by the Tenor of the Argument we are led to understand that the Emoluments of the *Christian* Ministry are comprehended in those Favours of Riches and Honours which *Christian* Magistrates are required thus indiscriminately to bestow, surely we cannot consider them as bound by any Laws of Scripture, Equity, Conscience, or good Policy to pursue such a Rule of Administration.

CAN any sincere Professor of CHRIST'S Religion really think our civil Governors ought to be so indifferent to the Honour of it, as to prostitute those Revenues which are entrusted by the Laws of our Country to their Patronage, and which our pious Ancestors, devoted to the Support of *Christian* Teachers, to the Maintenance of such Men as reject even *Christianity* itself? Or even that those who ordain Ministers in the *Church of England*, whilst they do not impose their Terms on any other Society, should be constrained to admit any as public Teachers in their Church, but such as in their own Consciences they believe

believe will adhere to the pure Doctrines of the Gospel?

ST. PAUL charged *Timothy* to lay Hands suddenly on no Man, 1 *Tim.* v. 22. But to commit what he had received from him, to faithful Men, who should be able to teach others also, 2 *Tim.* ii. 2.

THE remaining Part of this Chapter chiefly consists in proper Directions for the due Discharge of the pastoral Office. And amongst other Things he tells him, the Servant of the LORD must be gentle to all Men, apt to teach, patient, in Meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, Ver. 24, 25. And should follow Righteousness, Faith, Charity, Peace with them that call upon the Name of the LORD with a pure Heart, V. 22. He required that even the Deacons should first be proved, and that they should be such Men as were found to be not only holy and blameless in their Morals, but holding the Mystery of the Faith in a pure Conscience, 1 *Tim.* iii. 9, 10. And that he who was an Heretic should be rejected, *Tit.* iii. 10.

CAN

CAN any good Reason be given why all these Cautions and Directions should be wholly disregarded by those who now exercise the Authority of ordaining Ministers in the Church?

IF the Professors of the *Christian* Religion, detached, as they now are, into separate Societies, according to their several Notions and Persuasions, may yet be called the Church of CHRIST; if there still may be such Officers in his Church as there primitively were; if those Authorities appropriated to them in divers Parts of the *New Testament*, are still extensible to those who are ordained to the pastoral Office; if the Church of *England* may be considered as a Part of that Church, and her Ministers may be allowed to be Ministers of CHRIST'S Religion, they certainly may justify the regulating their religious Institutions and Practice, by such Directions as they find in the *New Testament*, and have a Right as well as other Christians, to follow their own Convictions in this Matter.

THOSE

THOSE who profess themselves Members of the Church of *England* may be presumed generally to be acquainted with the religious Opinions and Principles which the Pastors of that Church have avowed, and the Terms they have publicly made known, and every Man is at Liberty either to embrace or reject them. Their continuing to be of that Communion, is a strong Presumption that they coincide in their Opinions, and approve of their Practice, otherwise it must be supposed they would separate from them, and join with some other Society, whose Principles and Practice they thought better.

Is it then reasonable that the Bishops and Clergy of this Church, whilst they constrain no Man to follow their Mode of Religion, should be deprived of the Means of preserving to their Society, that Sense and Practice of Religion which they believe to be agreeable to the Gospel, by being compelled to admit Men as public Teachers in their Congregations, whose Notions they find to be contrary to the
general

general Sense and Opinion of their Society?

It cannot be expected that all Men should think and determine alike. In Matters capable of different Determinations, different Minds will always entertain various Opinions; and therefore no religious Establishment can be so framed as to expect it will meet with universal Approbation. And for this Reason some prudent Precautions are necessary, to prevent that Disorder and Confusion which would naturally arise from Diversity of Sentiment, if one Society was to interfere with, and interrupt the Practice of another.

To this End, every distinct Society ought to be free in the Choice of their own Terms and Mode of Religion, to prescribe to themselves such Rules for the Exercise of it, as they believe to be most agreeable to the Gospel, and to use every prudent and justifiable Means, whether by Subscriptions or otherwise, for preserving to themselves the free and undisturbed Practice of it.

THE Petitioners themselves allow, that some Bond or Centre of Union is necessary to the Existence and Continuance of a Church or religious Society, though at the same Time they deny that any Articles or Confession of Faith whatever, whether conceived in human or scriptural Terms, can be this Bond or Centre of Union. But surely if they do not admit that Faith in the holy Scriptures can be such a Bond, they must mean to substitute some Bond of human Device instead of it.

THEY also allow, that in every Society, whether supported by private Contribution or Parliamentary Patronage, there is vested somewhere a Right of defining the Conditions upon which its Ministers are to be entitled to the stipendary Considerations for their Services; but at the same Time seem unwilling to allow, that this Right with Respect to the Church of *England*, can be vested either in the national Legislators, the established ecclesiastical Governors, or the Members of the Society, unless they themselves may be permitted to dictate the Terms on which they shall exercise it.

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THE Foundation of the Protestant Profession is this, that the holy Scriptures are the Rule of Religion to all Christians; but as divers Parts of the Scriptures are differently interpreted by different Christians, it reserves to every Man the Right of private Judgment for himself, and of following Religion in the Way his own Conscience approves.

THE *British* Government, under its present Policy, preserves this Right to its Subjects, by permitting every different Sect to exercise Religion amongst themselves in their own Way, so as not to interfere with the Practice of those that differ from them, nor interrupt the Peace of civil Government and Society.

THE Church of *England* is one of these Societies, and may properly be considered as a Society of Christians, generally agreeing and uniting in those Opinions and Principles which her Pastors have publicly avowed, as is before observed.

THEIR Terms of Ordination being publicly and universally known, every Candidate for the Ministry, previous to his

applying for Orders, may satisfy himself whether he can, with a good Conscience, subscribe to those Terms, and is at Liberty either to accept or refuse them: And every dissenting Society is also free, to chuse the Terms whereon their Ministers are to be admitted into their respective Society; and each of them may in like Manner, be deemed a religious Society, agreeing in the Sentiments and Opinions of their respective Pastors, since their particular Practice has its Origination in those Teachers, who by their peculiar Doctrines primarily form those Societies, by bringing Men over to their Principles and Persuasions, and adopting their Mode of Religion accordingly.

IF *Dissenters* of every Profession (whether by the Patronage or Permission of the civil Government) do in Fact enjoy this Liberty unmolested in their several Societies, and may plead the Rights of Conscience to justify their Practice, ought not the same charitable Allowances be made to the Followers of the established Church?

CAN

CAN that which is esteemed a Virtue in *Dissenters*, be accounted a Vice in those who belong to the Church of *England*? I mean the following the Persuasions of their own Consciences.

WHO could have expected to find in the Writings of one of the most distinguished Advocates for religious Reformation, (one who publicly professes to plead the Cause of Truth, Religion, and Liberty, who gives it as his invariable Opinion, that in all religious Institutions, Scripture Precepts, and Scripture Precedents ought to be strictly followed and adhered to, who asserts that every Christian hath a sacred Right to search the Scriptures for himself, and to follow his own Convictions, and who strongly recommends Christian Candour and Charity to all; I say who could have expected to find such a Person publicly charging the whole Body of the Church of *England*, and every one who joins in their Prayers, with *open and undisguised Idolatry and Impiety, in paying divine Honour to the eternal SON of GOD?* tho' their own Consciences persuade

persuade them, that they have both Scripture Precept, and Scripture Precedent, to justify and direct their Practice.

CAN we suppose such a one, with all his Learning and Oratory, a fit Person to be admitted as a Teacher in that Church or Society, whose Notions so greatly differ from his own ?

WHAT Devotion, what Edification or what Satisfaction could a Congregation of conscientious Christians, who acknowledge the divine Character of the SON of GOD, receive from such a Minister ?

IF they are to be guided by his Doctrines, they must reject what they believe to be the Testimony of our LORD and his Apostles concerning himself. St. *John* has told us, ‘ In the Beginning was the
 ‘ Word, and the Word was with GOD;
 ‘ all Things were made by him, and without him was not any Thing made that
 ‘ was made. In him was Life, and the
 ‘ Life was the Light of Men, even the true
 ‘ Light which lighteth every Man that
 ‘ cometh into the World. He was in the
 ‘ World, and the World was made by
 ‘ him ;

‘ him; yet the World knew him not. He
 ‘ came to his own, and his own received
 ‘ him not; but as many as received him,
 ‘ to them gave he Power to become the
 ‘ Children of God, even to them that be-
 ‘ lieve on his Name. And this Word was
 ‘ made Flesh, and dwelt among us, and
 ‘ we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the
 ‘ only begotten of the Father, full of
 ‘ Grace and Truth,’ *John i.*

ST. PAUL declares him to be the Image
 of the invifible God, the first-begotten of
 the whole Creation, by whom and for
 whom all Things, both in Heaven and
 Earth, were made; that he is before all
 Things, and by him all Things confift,
Colof. i. That in him dwelleth all the
 Plenitude of the Godhead bodily, *Colof. ii.*
 That he is the Brightnefs of his Father’s
 Glory, and the exprefs Image of his Per-
 fon, who upholdeth all Things by the
 Word of his Power, *Heb. i. 3.* That at
 his Name every Knee should bow, *Phil.*
ii. 10. And that all the Angels of God
 should worship him, *Heb. i.*

ST.

ST. *Mat'hew* and St. *Luke* inform us, that a Voice from Heaven proclaimed him the SON of GOD, *Mat.* iii. 17. *Luke* i. 35. St. *Thomas* confessed him his LORD and his GOD, *John* xx. 28. The first Christian Martyr, St. *Stephen* prayed to him in the Hour of Death; *Lord Jesus receive my Spirit---*and, *Lord, lay not this Sin to their Charge, Acts* vii. 59, 60.

THE eleven Disciples, when he appeared to them after his Resurrection, worshipped him, *Mat.* xxviii. 16, 17. The whole Assembly of them when convened on an important Occasion, offered their joint Prayer to him: *Thou Lord, who knowest the Hearts of all Men, &c. Acts* i. 24.

WHEN St. *Peter* confessed him to be the SON of GOD, our LORD replied, *Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona, for Flesh and Blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven, Mat.* xvi. 17. He declared that he was in a State of Glory with the Father before the World was, *John* xvii. 5. That he was even now possessed of all Power both in Heaven
and

and Earth, *Mat.* xxviii. 18. And commanded all Men to honour the Son, even as they honour the Father; declaring that he who honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father, *John* v. 23. And as a Testimony of his Almighty Power, assured us, that [he that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, shall have everlasting Life, and he will raise him up at the last Day, *John* vi. 40.

So far was our LORD from rejecting or forbidding the Prayer of the penitent Thief, that he made him this gracious Reply, *To day shalt thou be with me in Paradise, Luke* xxiii. 43.

CAN we, after reading the above Passages of the New Testament, and many others which bear like Testimony of his divine Character, believe him to be no more than a Man like ourselves?

HOWEVER sufficient such Christians may suppose their penetrating Wisdom may be, in discovering the Mystery of Godliness to be no Mystery at all, we, for our Parts, must believe the Apostle, when he declares, 'Great is the Mystery of God-

‘linefs! God was made manifest in the
 ‘Flesh, justified by the Spirit, feen of
 ‘Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, be-
 ‘lieved on in the World, and received
 ‘up into Glory,’ 1 *Tim.* iii. 16.

IF we have the Form of Godlinefs, let us not deny the Power of it. If those who esteem JESUS CHRIST no more than a Man like themselves, can think that under their Claim to religious Liberty, they have a Right to hold their Opinions, and publish them boldly to the World, without any Censure or Reproach from such of their Christian Brethren, as think more highly of him, can they possibly think it consistent with that *Candour* and *Charity*, they so strongly recommend, to charge us with *Idolatry* and *Impiety*, for adhering to plain *Scripture Precepts* and *Scripture Precedents*, in paying divine Honour to JESUS CHRIST, the SON of the Living God, when those very Scriptures assure us, that this very CHRIST who came in the Flesh, is over all GOD blessed for ever, *Rom.* ix. 5.

BEING confirmed in this Faith by almost every Page of the New Testament,
 we

we cannot but think it our Duty to adorn the Doctrine of GOD our Saviour in all Things, *Tit.* ii. 10. and with strong Assurance look for that blessed Hope and the glorious Appearing of the great GOD, and our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, V. 13; who shall change our vile Bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body, according to the Working whereby he is able to subdue all Things unto himself, *Phil.* iii. 21.

Who then can justly blame the Pastors of our Church, for making Use of every prudent Precaution for excluding Persons of contrary Opinions from being Teachers in that Society, to whom their Doctrines would prove most disagreeable and afflicting? For it cannot be supposed that a Congregation of pious Christians, who acknowledge the divine Character and Power of the SON of GOD, could exercise their Religion happily under a Minister who should tell them from the Pulpit, that JESUS CHRIST is no more than a Man like themselves, and that in paying divine Honour to him, they were guilty of *Impiety* and *Idolatry*.

THIS single Instance may serve to give us some Idea of the Consequences of abolishing all clerical Subscriptions in the Church of *England*. The Clergy would indeed then be *free*; *free* to propagate *Truth* or *Error*, without any ecclesiastical Control: But how will the Christian Liberty of the Community in general be thereby secured, any more than it now is?

THE religious Principles, Terms of Communion, and Manner of Worship in the Church of *England*, being publicly known, every Man is at Liberty to examine and prove them, and hath free Access to the Scriptures to direct his Judgment therein. Whoever finds those Principles and Terms coincide with his own Opinion, may become a Member of this Church, from real Principles of Conscience, and may with good Reason expect a suitable Practice therein.

BUT if Men of every different Persuasion were to be indiscriminately admitted as public Teachers in the Church of *England*, our Practice of Religion therein might become very precarious, our Expectations

peccations disappointed, and that Exercise of Religion, whereof our Consciences approve, might become embarrassed and frustrated by the Change of our religious Pastor.

FOR, if the officiating Minister of every Congregation, is to be the sole Judge of what is, or is not, fit and expedient in the Performance of divine Service, without being subject to any settled Rules from ecclesiastical Authority, either in Form or Doctrine, the Practice of Religion in his Congregation, must depend on his Humour, (and may be varied as often as different Teachers succeed) and the Generality of his Flock may be under the disagreeable Circumstance of hearing in that Assembly, where they go for Devotion and Edification, Doctrines preached as Christian Truths, which their Consciences cannot receive as such, and of finding the public Worship Service conducted in such a Way as may be contrary to their Notions of divine Worship: And how are they to have Relief?

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IF the Minister be exempt from all Subscriptions, and free from all ecclesiastical Censure, either his Flock must follow his Doctrines, and conform to his Practice, or seek other Places of Devotion, and other Means of Edification ; and therefore to establish the Church on such Principles, would be only to transfer that religious Influence, which Dissenters now complain of, from the civil Legislature, and the Body of the established Clergy, to the particular Minister of every distinct Congregation.

WOULD it not be happier for the Community, that they exercise Religion in distinct Societies, according to their several different Notions and Persuasions, than to attempt to blend them together under such Circumstances ?

WHILST the Religion of the Church of *England* is only offered, but not compelled ; whilst her Terms of Ordination are accepted by none but such as openly profess their Choice and Approbation of them ; whilst all that disapprove of them, are left at Liberty to exercise the ministerial Function

Function in any Society which they find to agree in their particular Notions and Opinions, or to form new Societies among such Men as approve of their Doctrines; whilst neither the civil Power, nor the Members of the established Church, offer any Force or Control to the Practice of such as differ from them, but every Society is left to follow Religion in their own Way without Molestation; how are the Consciences of the People affected by the Subscriptions of the Clergy?

THOSE who now dissent from the established Church, are in general settled in Parts of the Kingdom where they have a Place of public Worship in their own Way near at Hand to resort to; but under the above-mentioned Circumstances, the Case might be otherwise with those who follow the present Establishment.

AND if we survey *England* throughout, we shall probably find no very considerable Number of Dissenters, except in, or near large and populous Towns; the Bulk of the People still profess to belong to the *Church of England*; and the Generality
I trust,

I trust, from the Principles of Conscience, whatever may have been insinuated to the contrary ; at least if the same *Charity* may be allowed them, which is claimed for all that belong to dissenting Societies, it may reasonably be supposed to be so, and that the far greater Part of the People of *England*, are comprehended in that Church. And if their present Mode of Religion be in Reality what their Consciences generally approve, how would their *Christian Liberty* be preserved, if their religious Practice were to be made Subject to the Caprice of Teachers of every different Profession?

AND if the present State of dissenting Christians in this Kingdom, be really such as it hath by some of them, been represented to be, how can they justify their interfering to control the Practice of the established Church?

“ If they really are in Possession of the
 “ most ample Liberty to judge for them-
 “ selves, if they have a full, acknow-
 “ ledged, and legal Right to conduct their
 “ Worship in the Manner they best ap-
 “ prove,

“ prove, without the Interference of any
 “ external Authority whatsoever, and are
 “ under no Restraint from civil or eccle-
 “ siastical Laws,” if they are free to chuse
 their own Terms of Ordination and Com-
 munion, follow their own way of Worship,
 and vary and change them as often as they
 see Occasion, and to preach and publish
 their own Doctrines without fear, or mo-
 lestation : In short, if they are (as it hath
 been affirmed) “ of all Men the most at
 “ Liberty to adopt that Plan of religious
 “ Establishment, which is best adapted to
 “ the great Ends of divine Worship,” Why
 is not that Plan (whatever it be) first
 adopted and established in their own So-
 cieties, that we may see and be convinced
 of the happy Fruits of it ?

BUT if, notwithstanding all these Ad-
 vantages, the Truth is, that their own
 Practice still remains unimproved ; if not-
 withstanding their Clamours against all
 Subscriptions whatever, “ they still have
 in many of their Churches, a kind of
 ecclesiastical Jurisdiction (in Reality tho’
 not in Name) whereby those who join
 D-d them.

themselves to their Communion are obliged to give Account of their Faith and religious Experience, and submit to Church Censure; if their Ministers at their Ordination are generall required to deliver a Confession of their Faith, such a Confession too as shall nearly coincide with the System adopted by the Societies with which they are connected; if their Societis are so attached to particular Forms of Worship, and to every the most inconsiderable Circumstance relating to them, that a Proposal of any Alteration would be attended with general Opposition," do they not themselves stand in Need of that Reformation which they so vehemently contend for in the established Church? Are not these the very Things they complain of as intollerable Grievances, the very Cause they alledge for their Separation?

INDEED, however inadequate the Practice of Dissenters may be to their Profession, it can by no Means excuse the Bishops and Clergy of the *Church of England*, in knowingly suffering theirs to remain erroneous or defective. IT

IT is a Matter that immediately concerns them to correct every Impropriety and make every possible Improvement in their Establishment, and they ought to take it into their most serious Consideration: If upon the most careful Examination, they should find that any Part of it is unwarrantable by the Gospel; if their Subscriptions be in any Respect an Embarrassment to them in the effectual Discharge of their pastoral Function, or any way injurious to true Religion, it is to be hoped they would speedily and generally unite in their Endeavours to remove every remaining Blemish, and be ready to make every Concession to their dissatisfied Brethren, that Conscience and Prudence will justify; and that every Branch of the Legislature would pay due Regard and Attention to the reasonable Remonstrances of so respectable a Body, for the Accomplishment of so important and interesting a Work. Their Adversaries have represented them as incapacitated for religious Improvements, but the Objections may Need as strict an Examination as the Things objected

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jected to. For daily Experience may convince us, that Freedom of Enquiry and Sentiment prevails as much in the established Church, as amongst Dissenters: And altho' it hath been publicly asserted by a warm Adversary to the Establishment, that the dissenting Clergy, in Proportion to their Numbers, far excel the Clergy of the *Church of England* in religious and scriptural Knowledge, still there is a wide Difference between Speculation and Experience; for, if by religious and scriptural Knowledge, is meant just Ideas of the Nature and Importance of true Religion, and the Design and Spirit of Christianity, it may with Modesty and Truth be said, that the Clergy of the *Church of England* at least are not inferior to their dissenting Brethren: And for Proof of this, we need only appeal to the usual Strain of their public Discourses, which every judicious and impartial Man must allow, to be in general more practical, moral and useful, than the Sermons of Dissenting Ministers.

AND

AND notwithstanding the Insinuations of Prejudice and Malevolence, there is in Reality no Reason to suppose that they are not in general as honest and conscientious Men, as good Christians, and every way as capable of reforming whatever is amiss in the Practice of their Church, as those who would reform it for them; and therefore if the *Church of England* needs a Reformation, we ought to expect it from her own Prelates and Clergy, and not from those who have separated from her, whose Notions we know to be contrary in many Respects, to the conscientious Followers of the Establishment.

WHEN I mention our Expectation of all necessary Reformation and Improvement in the *Church of England* from her own Clergy, I do not mean to be understood, that as Lay-Christians we ought implicitly to acquiesce in whatever they have established, or may establish, whether it be or be not agreeable to our own Consciences; for it concerns every Christian carefully to search the Scriptures for himself, and prove his own Religion.

IF

If upon due Examination, we find we cannot adhere to the established Church, without deviating from what we are persuaded is the Path of our Duty, we do well to separate from her, and join in that Society wherein we think we can serve God with greater Propriety and Satisfaction: On the contrary, if we are satisfied her Way of Worship is such as the Almighty will approve, and that the Doctrines taught by her Ministers are in general agreeable to the Scriptures of Truth, tending to confirm us in a right Faith, and to establish and improve us in a rational and becoming Piety, and the Practice of all those Virtues which the Gospel requires, we may safely conclude that (whatever Articles the Clergy may have subscribed) they do not obstruct our Way to everlasting Happiness; and that this Church, is a truly Christian Church, however it may differ from other Christian Churches or Societies, in Matters of Form and Ceremony, which we ought to consider only as the Dress of Religion, and not Religion itself. We need not be offended

fended that the Church of Rome declares herself infallible, or that Dissenters affirm the Worship of one Living and True God is no where to be found but amongst themselves. We need not be dismayed that the former calls us *Heretics* and *Apostates*, or that the latter charge us with *Impie'y* and *Idolatry*, whilst we use our best Endeavours to know and obey the Will of God, and whilst our Hearts assure us that our Way of Worship is such as his Word requires.

IF Others differ from us in Opinion, let them in God's Name, follow what they believe to be right, without any Molestation or Interruption from us; but let us vindicate to ourselves the same Christian Liberty which we so freely grant to Others.

AND having examined and proved our own Practice by the Word of God, and our own impartial Reason, let us steadily adhere to that which in our own Consciences we believe to be true Religion: For if whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin, doubtless the Practice of what in our Conscience

sciences we believe to be right is Virtue. And whilst we are pursuing our own Duty and Happiness, in a Way that we have good Reason to hope and believe will be accepted by GOD in CHRIST JESUS; whilst by the Innocency and Piety of our Lives we strive to adorn our holy Profession in the established Church of our native Country, and to become Examples worthy of the Imitation of all that are without it, let us not forget that the Religion of JESUS CHRIST is a Religion of Peace and Love, which requires us to behold all Men in the Mirror of Benevolence: And therefore we ought not to think ill of Others, because they do not concur in our Opinions, or join in our Practice, but to make all due Allowances for the different Reasonings of Men; and however mistaken we may suppose them to be in their religious Notions, we ought to believe them influenced by Motives and Principles of Conscience as well as ourselves, and be united in Love, though we differ in Opinion.

AND

AND let us not cease to offer up our frequent and fervent Prayers to our heavenly Father, who is the Author of Peace and Lover of Concord, and the Giver of every good and perfect Gift, that for the Sake of his well-beloved Son, JESUS CHRIST, the only Mediator and Saviour of us all, he would vouchsafe so to dispose the hearts of all Christians, of whatever Denomination or Persuasion, that they may see and pursue the Things that belong to their Peace, and study to improve their Religion, to those good Ends for which it was intended, *viz.* the moral Perfection and true Happiness of Mankind. That whatsoever Things are true, whatsoever Things are honest, whatsoever Things are just, whatsoever Things are pure, whatsoever Things are lovely, whatsoever Things are of good Report; if there be any Virtue, if there be any Praise, we may all think of these Things and pursue them. That every Sect and Society among us, laying aside all unreasonable Partiality and Prejudice, all Malice and Guile, all uncharitable Surmises and evil

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speaking against each other, none may affect to be wise beyond what is revealed; but all may, as new-born Babes, desire the sincere Milk of the Word, and grow thereby; and with Singleness of Heart and Love of the Truth, be ready to acquiesce and comply with each other in all Things fit and reasonable. That as we are called in one common Hope of our Vocation, as there is one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, and one Mediator between God and Man, even the Man CHRIST JESUS; we may all be connected in Love, to the Acknowledgment of the Mystery of God, and of the FATHER, and of CHRIST, and walk in CHRIST, as we have received him, still remembering, that universal Love, is the peculiar distinguishing Mark of his true Disciples, whose holy Religion we all, in our several different Ways, profess to follow. 10 FE 58

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